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ABSTRACT

The 2000-2001 annual report of Minnesota's PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) Center, a statewide organization that provides information, training, and assistance to parents of children and youth with disabilities, reports on 24 programs in three categories: parent training (12 programs); programs for students and professionals (7 programs); and national projects or technical assistance (5 programs). It reports that the PACER Center has far exceeded its goals for all of its projects during the year. Its parent training programs provide individual information and assistance, workshops for parents and special groups, training and assistance to underrepresented parents, local capacity building, public information, and parent and professional collaboration. Among the 24 individual program reports are the following: Alliance Project (Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers); FAPE (Families and Advocates Partnership for Education); CADRE (Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education); Parent Training Project; Project for Families of Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders; American Indian Parent Network Project; State Improvement Grant; Surrogate Parent Foster Parent Project; Grandparent-to-Grandparent Project; Project PRIDE (PACER's Rehabilitation Act Information and Disability Education); Project Youth; PACER's Health Information & Advocacy Center; Minnesota Parent Center; PACER's Web Site: Count Me In (PACER's program on disability awareness); Abuse Prevention Project; Juvenile Justice Project; Computer Resource Center; and Project KITE (Kids Included through Technology are Enriched). (DB)

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# PACER Center, Inc.
# 2000-2001
# Program Evaluation Report

- **Parent Training Programs**
- **Programs for Students**
- **Technical Assistance Projects**

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Eighteen organizations in the PACER coalition and PACER's corporate and foundation supporters are in the Appendix

On our cover: Top to bottom –Nkauj Yer Xiong and his sister, Lindsey Rolf, Andrew Olson, and Jean Nelson, Project KITE with visitors to the Simon Technology Center at PACER.

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# PACER Center's Evaluation Report 2000-2001 Executive Summary

PACER Center, Inc., is a statewide organization that provides information, training and assistance to parents of children and young adults with **all** disabilities (physical, learning, mental, health, and emotional). Its mission is to improve and expand opportunities that enhance the quality of life for children and youth with disabilities and their families. Eighteen Minnesota disability organizations are part of the PACER coalition.

PACER was established in 1977 when it conducted a five-month pilot project under a small grant from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning. Since September 1978, PACER has been funded by grants from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. The organization was the first parent coalition funded by the Division of Personnel Preparation to provide parent training. The Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning continue to cooperate with and provide encouragement to PACER Center.

Additional financial assistance for PACER projects during the past year has come from Andersen Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, Otto Bremer Foundation, The Bush Foundation, Carolyn Foundation, Cummins Engine Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, Jane McCarthy Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation, Pentair, Wells Fargo Foundation, Xcel Energy, and other foundations and corporations. (See the appendix for a complete list.)

PACER began with one project, Parents Helping Parents. During 2000-2001, PACER offered 24 programs in three categories:

1. **Parent Training**

- Parents Helping Parents Project
- Early Childhood Parent Training Project
- Project for Families of Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
- American Indian Parent Project
- State Improvement Grant
- Surrogate Parent Foster Parent Project
- Grandparent-to-Grandparent Program
- Project PRIDE
- Project Youth
- Health Information and Advocacy Center
- Minnesota Parent Center
- Web Site

## II. Programs for Students and Professionals

- COUNT ME IN Disability Awareness Program
- The Abuse Prevention Project: PACER's Prevention Projects for Children, Families and Professionals
- Family Strengths Project
- Juvenile Justice Project
- The National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice
- Computer Resource Center & Software Lending Library
- Project KITE

## III. National Projects - Technical Assistance

- Alliance Project – Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers
- FAPE Project – Families & Advocates Partnership for Education
- The TATRA Project – Technical Assistance About Training on the Rehabilitation Act for Families with Disabilities
- CADRE Project – Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education
- National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice (NCEDJJ)

Each year, the requests for information, training and individual assistance from all of PACER's programs increase. From June 1, 2000 to May 31, 2001, 8,693 parents, professionals and adults with disabilities attended PACER's 345 workshops. PACER's staff received 23,569 requests for information and assistance. Informational presentations about PACER programs were given to almost 4,500 people.

The *PACESETTER* newsletter, mailed three times a year to more than 80,000 individuals each time, provides information about special education topics and related activities. This year, eight other newsletters, the *Early Childhood Connection, Computer Monitor, Family Involvement, Family Voices, PACER Partners, Looking Ahead, The Parent Centers Alliance and* TATRA's *Point of Departure* were mailed to a combined circulation of more than 37,600 people.

Three programs provide important information for students and teachers. The COUNT ME IN Disability Awareness Program reached 12,156 students and 950 teachers and staff at 171 puppet shows with information about the needs and abilities of individuals with disabilities. The Abuse Project provided 1,424 students and 119 teachers with information on child abuse prevention at 28 puppet shows. PACER's Computer Resource Center provided information and assistance to 3,891 people about computer technology, adaptive devices and educational software to benefit children and adults with disabilities.

PACER's five technical assistance projects, the Alliance Project, FAPE, TATRA, The National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice and CADRE are all national projects. The Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers, the Alliance Project, provides national coordination and planning for **all** the parent centers. The Coordinating Office of the Alliance Project is located at PACER Center with four regional centers in Ohio, New Hampshire, North Carolina and California reporting to the Coordinating Office.

FAPE links families, advocates, and self-advocates. It 1) helps families of children with disabilities understand and use IDEA '97; 2) works with agencies, organizations and families to promote the best ways to help children with disabilities learn; and 3) ensures broad understanding of IDEA through effective networking, marketing, and outreach activities.

PACER Center, located in Minneapolis, is FAPE's Coordinating Office. It is one of four projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education to reach parents, administrators, service providers and policymakers nationwide with information about implementing IDEA '97.

The Technical Assistance About Training on the Rehabilitation Act for Families with Disabilities, The TATRA Project, provides technical assistance about vocational rehabilitation, independent living and transition issues to parent centers funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration since 1994.

The Juvenile Justice Project at PACER is a member of a collaboration of researchers at several universities to form The National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice. This project enables PACER to bring family issues on Juvenile Justice to this national project.

CADRE's (Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education) purpose is to provide information, training, and technical assistance (TA) to states, schools, parents and teachers to enable them to resolve disputes through more expedient and less confrontational means, including mediation.

In 2000-2001, more than 0 people were reached by **all** of PACER services and programs. (Some people may have contacted the Center more than once). Comments from parents, professionals and students indicate that PACER Center makes an important contribution to improving services for children and young adults with disabilities and their families.

## Parent Training Project 2000-2001

Through its six levels of parent training activities in 2000-2001, PACER Center served 11,244 people. (Note: When results are summarized, the number may include several contacts from the same person. The total number refers to total contacts made; the actual number of persons may be less than 11,244.)

Those served included: 1,016 who attended 49 Level II workshops; 307 who attended 19 Level III workshops and presentations for individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds; 109 in attendance at 6 Level IV advocacy meetings and updates and 20 parents who attended a two-day advocacy training; and 11,244 mail and telephone contacts from persons seeking information and guidance for Parent Training and 317 people who attended 11 Level VI presentations. There were 23,569 mail and telephone contacts for **all** PACER's projects.

### Level I: Individual Information and Assistance

PACER received 11,244 calls and letters for information and assistance during 2000-2001. Of the telephone calls and letters, 49% of these requests were for individual assistance and 36% were for information and education.

A follow-up survey was made of 29 parents who had contacted PACER for individual assistance in 2000-2001. Eighty-six percent of the parents indicated the information they received had been very helpful, 90% said they were more confident in their ability to work with schools after speaking with PACER, and 93% said that the information received had enabled them to obtain at least some of the services they felt their children needed. Eighty-six percent felt they could not have received the assistance they needed if PACER's services had not been available.

### Levels II Workshops for parents and special groups:

During 2000-2001, 1,016 parents, professionals and others interested in special education attended PACER's 49 Level II workshops. Twenty-eight were basic workshops were presented to 444 people and 21 specialized workshops that reached 572 individuals. Parents represented 81% of the attendees at all the workshops.

Of the 27 parents who had attended a Level II workshop and were contacted in a follow-up survey, 89% said the workshop information had proven useful, 85% felt more confident in dealing with schools due to the workshop, 70% had become more involved in their children's educational programs since attending the workshop, and 72% believed their children had received better services when the workshop information was put to use.

**Level III: Training and Assistance to Underrepresented Parents**

Level III workshops and community activities have been developed by PACER to meet the special needs of culturally and socially diverse and underrepresented parents, providing them with information so that they may help their children receive appropriate educational services.

PACER held 19 Level III workshops and in-services that reached 307 people. PACER's staff attended conferences with 521 parents, of whom 333 (64%) were considered low income and minorities, and assisted by telephone almost 650 parents who specifically identified themselves as minority. PACER may have received additional requests for assistance from minority parents who have not identified themselves as such.

**Level IV – Local Capacity Building**

Local Capacity Building activities are designed to improve and expand awareness by providing information and assistance to communities throughout Minnesota. During the year, PACER hosted 3 advocacy meetings for 75 people and provided Advocacy Training for 20 parents at a two-day workshop.

**Level V – Public Information**

During 2000-2001, it was possible for the entire population in Minnesota to be reached by public information activities more than once. There were 417 articles on PACER published in Minnesota print media. PACER made appearances on radio programs and television shows. Many public service announcements were made on behalf of PACER. In addition, several regional and national publications published articles about the PACER organization and/or its materials. Many organizations continue to reprint articles from PACER's newsletters. PACER also reached more than 4,400 people through 159 presentations made to various types of audiences.

**Level VI: Parent and Professional Collaboration**

PACER conducted 11 in-services and presentations during 2000-2001 for 317 people. PACER served on 19 task forces and policy committees that met 60 times.

**Other Parent Training Projects:**

**Early Childhood Parent Project**

Since June 1988, PACER has received grants from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning to provide workshops, information and assistance to parents of infants, toddlers and preschoolers with disabilities.

The Early Childhood Parent Project helps families become knowledgeable about early intervention service systems and their rights under the law. Workshops also assist families with their communication skills for team planning and advocating for their child.

PACER's Early Childhood Parent Project during 2000-2001 presented 19 workshops for 264 people and received more than 750 calls from families requesting information and assistance.

During the year, the *Early Childhood Connection* was published two times and mailed to more than 8,000 people. The first issue of the newsletter, published in November 1988, had a mailing list of 200 people.

**Project for Families of Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders**

PACER's Project for Families of Children with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (EBD) helps foster the development of a statewide network of parents capable of impacting systems that serve children with EBD, and assists families in understanding their rights in accessing mental health and educational services.

The project staff responded to more than 1,700 calls requesting information and individual assistance and participated in 20 Minnesota workshops for 432 people and 7 workshops nationally reaching 1,805 individuals attended 114 individual assistance meetings with parents, family members and others.

The EBD Project is a necessary and timely resource to help parents understand the many aspects of emotional disorders in children and their effect on families.

**American Indian Parent Project**

In January 1996, with assistance from The Bush Foundation, PACER began a three-year project to increase services to American Indian families who have children with emotional or behavioral disorders, or who are at risk of developing such disorders with additional support from foundations and corporations, the project has expanded. The focus of this initiative is community-level advocacy and information services for families to increase their awareness of, and participation in, mental health and educational services, and to increase the use of PACER's services statewide by Indian families.

From June 2000 through May 31, 2001, five workshops and trainings for Indian families and providers have been presented to 45 people. Project staff provided information to 95 American Indian staff of 13 agencies about the project. More than 350 calls were received from Indian parents and professionals related to education and mental health planning during this period.

**State Improvement Grant**

PACER Center received funding through a grant awarded by Minnesota's Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL) for participation in the federally funded State Improvement Grant (SIG). The focus of PACER activities under this grant is to 1) conduct statewide training to effectively involve parents of children with disabilities in interagency delivery systems and 2) to conduct statewide trainings to promote school to work transition opportunities for students interagency collaboration and coordinated services

**Surrogate Parent Foster Parent Project**

In 2000-2001, through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, PACER continued to provide training and information on the state's surrogate parent rules to foster parents and professionals.

Two workshops were held for 20 potential surrogate parents. The workshops were designed for foster parents who were interested in serving as surrogate parents for children in their care and for the professionals who work with foster parents. PACER received over 80 calls on surrogate issues from parents and professionals.

**Grandparent-to-Grandparent Project**

PACER's Grandparent-to-Grandparent Program, initiated in 1992, provides support and information for grandparents whose grandchildren have special needs. During the year, the program has continued to research and compile materials for grandparents, offered support sessions, promoted the telephone support system, and

initiated efforts to network with other programs for grandparents.

**Project PRIDE**

Project Pride, PACER's Rehabilitation Act Information and Disability Education, provides individual answers to questions about the Rehabilitation Act and other programs and services it affects. The program presented eight basic workshops for 252 participants and seven specialized workshops for 239 people.

Two workshops were presented in Iowa consisting of a basic introduction to the Rehabilitation Act, a comparison of IDEA and Section 504 and how they related to transition-aged students. One workshop was parent-focused with 20 people and one workshop was held for 75 professionals. Nine in-services were held for 408 professionals and individual assistance was provided to 392 people.

**Project Youth**

Project Youth, Family Centered Community Transition Services (FACCTS) purpose is to promote the health of youth with disabilities and their employment or educational goals in achieving employment. Project Youth serves adolescents with chronic illness or disabilities, ages 12 to 22 and their families as they plan transition to adulthood. In addition, Project Youth works closely and collaborates with various professionals including community physicians, teachers, employers, policymakers and agency personnel who focus on transition planning. Project Youth presented 15 workshops to 517 people and made 9 presentations to 263 people about transition issues.

**PACER's Health Information and Advocacy Center**

PACER's Health Information and Advocacy Center was established June 1999 as a central source of information and advocacy to help families navigate through health and insurance systems, and to provide information about how families and professionals can create positive and collaborative relationships together.

Eight workshops for families reached 140 people and six presentations were made to 415 professionals so they would feel comfortable referring parents to the project. The staff worked with pediatric and family practice residents and medical students. The Center provides information and resources about all aspects of the health care system to families and professionals.

**Minnesota Parent Center**

The Minnesota Parent Center is a PACER Project that serves families in **all** educational settings. The goal of Minnesota Parent Center has been to train parents and professionals about parent involvement and participation, parent professional partnerships, parenting skills, child development, effective communication techniques, current topics related to family involvement and parent-professional collaboration. To accomplish this goal, 59 workshops for 910 individuals were presented. Thirteen workshops were conducted for 221 parents and professionals from the African-American, Hmong, Native American and Hispanic/Latino racial and cultural groups. Twenty-eight presentations were made to 561 individuals and 20 pre-services and in-services for 315 professionals. The Minnesota Parent Project provided more than 3,500 requests for information and assistance.

**Web Site – www.pacer.org**

With assistance from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, PACER greatly expanded its Web site in September 1997. From June 1, 2000 through May 31, 2001, PACER estimates that the site received approximately 3.5 million hits and 237,400 visits from individuals in Minnesota, the United States and over 80 countries.

**Programs For Students 2000-2001:**

**COUNT ME IN Disability Awareness Program**

The COUNT ME IN project trains volunteers to provide educational programs about people with disabilities to preschool and elementary age students. The program seeks to foster positive attitudes about people with disabilities and to dispel myths and fears regarding disabilities.

Since its inception in 1979, the COUNT ME IN program, using child-size puppets and special scripts to present its message, has reached more than 279,000 individuals. During 2000-2001, COUNT ME IN reached 13,106 students and adults at 171 shows.

This year COUNT ME IN held seven volunteer trainings for 47 participants. Through their efforts, more children and adults were reached with correct information about the needs and abilities of people with disabilities. Gamma Sigma Sigma Service Sorority's Twin Cities alumnae chapter provides leadership for the COUNT ME IN disability awareness program as their community service project. They presented 4 shows for weekend and evening audiences reaching more than 350 children and adults.

**The Abuse Prevention Project**

The Abuse Prevention Project's began in 1983. PACER's Let's Prevent Abuse project was originally developed because of the increasing awareness those children with disabilities are at a higher risk for child abuse. A puppet presentation for children addresses self-protection strategies, feelings associated with abuse, the importance of telling someone, and the fact that a child is never at fault. The shows, for children with or without disabilities, give students an opportunity to interact with the puppets and puppeteers. The message is given in a sensitive and non-threatening manner.

The LPA puppet shows made 28 presentations to 1,424 elementary school age students and 119 teachers and other adults in the Twin Cities area.

PACER's Abuse Prevention Project began its Family Strengths Project in October 1991 under a grant from the Minnesota Children's Trust Fund Council. The Family Strength Project recognizes that preventing child abuse involves building on the strengths of individuals, families, and communities. Extensive family and community input has shaped the program at every stage.

Program components include publications for families, puppet shows for preschoolers, and workshops for service providers. A focus of this program is cultural and linguistic adaptation for the Hmong and Latino communities.

The 31 Family Strengths puppet shows were presented to 666 children and 472 adults. The shows were preformed in English, Hmong, or Spanish. Five 25-page booklets and one 90 minute cassette (a reading of all 5 booklets) was completed and is available in Hmong, Spanish and English.

The Abuse Prevention Project provided information and assistance to approximately 350 individuals through its link on the PACER Web site received more than 3,000 visits with questions about the project.

**Juvenile Justice Project**

In May 1994, staff began the development of an innovative and widely needed program to focus on the needs of children and youth with disabilities that are involved with the juvenile justice system. The project was initially funded by The McKnight Foundation, and later by the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation. During 2000-2001, the program presented six presentations and workshops to 207 people.

In October 1999, The National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice (NCEDJJ) was established with PACER as a sub contractor to provide collaborative research, training, technical assistance and dissemination program to help understand and develop more effective responses to the needs of youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system. During this year, 9 presentations were made to 524 people nationally about the NCEDJJ Project.

**Computer Resource Center**

PACER's Computer Resource Center began in September 1987 as a means to make the advantages offered by modern technology available to children and young adults with disabilities. The Center provides to parents, professionals, and children and adults with disabilities information, individual assistance and "hands-on" experience appropriate for the individual's special needs. As a result, individuals with disabilities can maximize their potential to become as independent as possible through the use of computer technology.

During 2000-2001, the Computer Resource Center provided 105 workshops, in-services and presentations reaching 2,069 individuals. More than 1,500 people contacted the Computer Resource Center for information and assistance. PACER's Software Lending Library began November1, 1989. During 2000-2001, the lending library's 265 members borrowed 2,714 pieces of software programs and assistive devices during the year. The members of the library have almost 1,600 pieces to choose from when selecting. The CRC provided 120 consultations for children and adults with disabilities with 314 people attending.

**Project KITE**

Project KITE (Kids included through Technology are Enriched) is a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education to PACER's Computer Resource Center. The purpose of the project is to develop a series of training sessions for early childhood personnel and parents of young children on learning about technology that will foster the inclusion of children with disabilities in home and classroom settings with their peers and to build self-esteem.

During 1999-2000, The KITE Project model was introduced in Duluth and Pipestone, Minnesota through the new KITE Outreach Project. Duluth and Pipestone areas served 6 focus children and their 90 classmates being served by six teams of parents and professionals from preschools trained in the KITE Model. This year, the White Earth Indian Reservation was the focus of concentration by the KITE Outreach Project. The Project served 3 focus children and their 26 classmates. In April, training began at the 4th and final site, Princeton, Minnesota. The site will served 3 focus children and approximately 35 of their classmates. Three teams of parents and professionals served the children.

**Conclusion**

PACER Center has far exceeded its goals for all of its projects that serve children and young adults with disabilities and their families and professionals who work with them in Minnesota and nationally.

# Alliance Project
# Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers

The Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (Alliance) began October 1, 1997 funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The purpose of the Alliance Project is to provide technical assistance nationwide to Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs).

The overall goal is to expand the leadership capability of parent centers nation wide so that they can provide information and training to an increasing number of parents of children and youth with disabilities. The families served represent a wide range of special needs, ages, ethnicity, economic, linguistic and educational backgrounds. The Alliance is based on the model of parent-to-parent peer empowerment that characterizes the PTIs and CPRCs it serves.

The Coordinating Office of the Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers, located at PACER Center, provides national coordination and planning for the overall project. The Project offers direct technical assistance to parent centers through an annual conference, technology assistance for on-line access and web sites, four topical institutes, transition materials, centers of expertise, standardized curricula, an electronic newsletter, and other publications.

The Alliance has established collaborative relationships with other OSEP technical assistance and dissemination projects such as the national clearinghouses, regional resource centers, and research projects in order to identify the best practices and strategies for working with families, teachers, and schools. The Alliance has also established networks with media and businesses to assist parent centers with better business practices. In addition, Alliance has established activities between parent centers and collaborators on the issues of systems change and school reform.

Four established PTIs located in New Hampshire, Ohio, California and North Carolina are the regional centers for Alliance. They provide and arrange for direct and individual assistance to parent centers in their geographic area much as the local centers organize services for parents. Each PTI and Community Parent Resource Center receives technical assistance designed to meet its particular needs and are invited to attend an annual Alliance regional conference through one of the regional centers.

**Coordinated System of Communication**

One of the major goals of the Alliance Project was to develop an infrastructure to support a system of coordinated communication among parent centers. To do this, the Alliance Coordinating Office holds a 2½-day training for Alliance staff each year. The outside evaluation consultant also attends this meeting and facilitates discussion around the annual evaluation of the project. The meeting includes a review of the goals and objectives for the upcoming year and discussion about new and better ways to provide technical assistance.

To help maintain communications, the Alliance Web site (**http://www.taalliance.org**) and e-mail (**alliance@taalliance.org**) became active on October 1, 1997. Both provide an informational Newsline and a resource database linked to parent centers about Alliance staff and services.

Each of the four regional centers, based on their own needs, developed a technological infrastructure for their individual centers to better equip themselves to facilitate communication among the parent centers. Regional centers will then assist parent centers with computer-related questions, enhance their e-mail capacity,

and upgrade computers, printers, and other equipment.

The Coordinating Office and regional centers sent approximately 690 informational faxes and mailings to parent centers. Visits to the Alliance Web site for the year were 92,169 for an average of 7,680 per month.

The regional centers conducted individual interviews and developed an Individualized Technical Assistance Agreement (ITAG) annually with each funded PTI and CPRC with assistance from the Coordinating Office. Many parent centers commented that the process was very helpful.

To help the regional centers, and in turn all of the parent centers, the Coordinating Office has developed standardized training materials on two key topics each year. Based on the needs assessment, parent center input, and discussions with the regional centers, the topic for the first two training manuals was determined to be IDEA 97 (one set in English and one set in Spanish) developed during 1997-98. The second year the Coordinating Office developed a training module including transparencies on positive behavioral interventions and a second one on IDEA with Native American graphics. Third year, the modules included Positive Behavioral Interventions in Spanish and Cultural Diversity and competency. The fourth year, ADHD and IDEA low reading level are awaiting review and will then be disseminated.

**Information, Training and Dissemination**

Based on the results of a survey sent to all Alliance project participants, the National Conference, entitled "Keys to a Brighter Future" placed specific emphasis on issues relating to diversity, IDEA 97, business and management topics, juvenile justice, and technology. An effort was made to ensure a culturally diverse group of participants, by affording numerous community groups the means to attend the conference. For a number of the 350 people attending, this was their first time at a national conference.

The Alliance National Conference was held January 24-27, 2001, in Washington, DC. The 350 individuals attending represented the parent centers, the Alliance project, community groups, national disability organizations, and other OSEP funded projects. On January 24, 2001, the day was devoted to the training of parent center directors. Twenty-eight directors attended the New Directors Orientation, along with all members of the Alliance staff. The directors were those who had previously not attended an Orientation day and those who were new directors this year.

The Coordinating Office compiled evaluations from the overall conference and from the directors' session. The results were disseminated to the OSEP staff and the regional centers. To the question, "How would you rate this conference?" The response was 4.6% on a 5-point scale with 5 being extremely useful.

To assist the Alliance regional centers, the Coordinating Office goal is to present four regional conferences and one national conference each year for at least 200 people.

Each of the regional centers planned and organized an annual conference for the parent centers in their region. Each regional office contacted the parent centers in its region to determine topics and locations for the regional conferences. The conferences were held during May, June and August 2001 with 279 people attending.

| Date | Location | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 05/09-11/01 | Northeast Region – Portland, ME | 78 |
| 05/22-24/01 | West Region – Honolulu, HI | 78 |
| 06/14-16/01 | South Region – Charleston, SC | 65 |
| 08/02-04/01 | Midwest Region – Colorado Springs, CO | 58 |
| Total | | 279 |

The Coordinating Office, in conjunction with each of the regional centers, has developed and presented four Institutes yearly. The goal for the Institutes is to reach 100 people on topics identified by the parent centers. The four topics for the Institutes during 2000-2001 were Cultural Diversity, Access the General Curriculum, Advanced Management and Executive Management. Each regional center was assigned to assist the

Coordinating Office with the planning and implementation of each Institute. During the Alliance reporting year, the four Institutes reached 170 participants. Evaluation ratings from each of the Institutes are included. Using a 5-point scale with 5 being extremely useful.

| Date | Location | Topic | Participants | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 07/19-21/01 | Chicago, IL | Cultural Diversity | 33 | 4.8 |
| 07/26-28/01 | Minneapolis, MN | Access the General Curriculum | 54 | 4.7 |
| 08/09-11/01 | San Francisco, CA | Advanced Management | 44 | 4.5 |
| 08/09-11/01 | San Francisco, CA | Executive Management | 39 | 4.2 |
| Total | | | 170 | 4.5 average |

The Alliance Web site (**http://www.taalliance.org**) provides frequent updates and new links are established on an ongoing basis. The Alliance Web site had 92,169 people visited the site in the reporting period.

| Month | Number of Visits |
|---|---|
| 10/00 | 6738 |
| 11/00 | 7294 |
| 12/00 | 5462 |
| 01/01 | 7255 |
| 02/01 | 7288 |
| 03/01 | 8562 |
| 04/01 | 6908 |
| 05/01 | 8439 |
| 06/01 | 8055 |
| 07/01 | 8459 |
| 08/01 | 9420 |
| 09/01 | 8289 |
| Total | 92,169 |

The Coordinating Office's staff has worked to establish Web sites on the Alliance main server for parent centers that do not already have their own sites. Web sites have been established for all the regional centers, and for 9 parent centers.

To further help with communications among the regional centers and the parent centers, the Coordinating Office has established the Web site's Newsline and a toll free telephone number: 1-888-248-0822. This information was also made available to the U.S. Department of Education, OSEP, and other national technical assistance projects.

The total number of contacts for the reporting period of October 1, 2000 – September 30, 2001 reported 3,689, of which the Coordinating Office had 1,243 and 2,446 from the 4 regional centers; Midwest Regional Center, Northeast Regional Center, South Regional Center and the West Regional Center. Contacts came from other organizations, individuals, parent centers requesting information and assistance.

*A Parent Center Directory* has been included on Alliance's Web site since its inception on October 1, 1997. Weekly updates are made as necessary. An Alliance newsletter is published twice a year. The first newsletter for this year was published during the National Alliance Conference held January 2001. The second newsletter will be published in the fall of 2001.

**Diverse Families**

A goal for the Alliance project is to develop an administrative structure to promote involvement of diverse families and to work collaboratively with all multicultural organizations and organizations serving parents with

limited literacy or limited English proficiency.

To begin this process, the Coordinating Office provided cultural diversity training at their first staff retreat in October 1997. The Coordinating Office Multicultural Technical Assistance Coordinators at the National Alliance Conferences that were held in Washington, DC, January 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001, conducted presentations. The Institute on Leadership and Diversity was held August 1998 and July 1999 in Albuquerque, New Mexico and in San Francisco of July 2000 and Chicago 2001.

Each of the regional centers' staff works with grassroots organizations in their region to keep current on local issues. Each of the regional centers has hired or appointed a Multicultural Coordinator, and these individuals made outreach efforts to diverse families and multicultural organizations in their regions. Conference calls and collaborative activities with parent centers about the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) were initiated.

The Coordinating Office has developed transparencies and an outline that is being used for training on cultural diversity. The curriculum was presented at the Leadership and Diversity Institute in July 1999. A discussion was held and input given by participants. A final version was completed this year and disseminated to all parent centers for their use. The project has identified existing materials in different languages, which is being incorporated into the database on the Alliance Web site.

**Collaborative Activities between Parent Centers and Stakeholders in Systems Change and School Reform**

The Alliance has provided leadership training at the national and regional meetings to enable parent center staff to become active. Sessions at the national conference have been held on State Improvement Grants (SIG) and Implementations: Parent Center Involvement; Inclusive Assessment and Accountability Systems: Issues and Opportunities for Students with Disabilities in Standards Based Reform; IDEA and Charter Schools; and Realizing the Possibilities: Inclusion Advocacy Strategies for Families. Mailings to parent centers have included: OSEP memo on SIG applications, Alliance Newsletter that has had articles on State Improvement Grants (SIG) Collaboration and a survey of Parent Centers who have participated on SIG grants done collaboratively with OSEP.

**Collaborative Activities with National Clearinghouses, Regional Resource Centers, And National Dissemination Projects**

The Coordinating Office has provided contact information for all parent centers to the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) for information and resource exchange. In year two, the Coordinating Office participated in joint technical assistance providers' meetings with NICHCY, the Regional Resource Centers (RRC) and others. Various collaborative activities were discussed. All regional centers had NICHCY attend their regional conferences, and the Coordinating Office staff will work with NICHCY staff to develop a survey to be sent to all the parent centers on how they can use NICHCY's services. Alliance's Coordinating Office worked with the RRCs to coordinate attendance of all parent centers at the RRC sponsored trainings on IDEA '97 presented by OSEP.

Through its computerized network and Web sites, the Coordinating Office and all parent centers are linked with NICHCY. Alliance provides information from the Regional Resource Centers, universities and national projects to all parent centers.

Alliance's Coordinating Office and Alliance's regional center staff gave 64 presentations, reaching an audience of 5,575 participants. The Alliance Coordinating Office and regional centers' staff participated in 49 meetings and task forces, reaching 2,952 participants in the year 4. The goal was to reach 500 people each year through presentations at national conferences and 300 people through participation at meetings and task forces.

**Collaborative and Innovative Activities with Representatives of the Business Community and the Media**

The Alliance Project established a national Business Advisory Board of experts in the country. The purpose is to assist parent centers on how to collaborate with their local business communities. As part of this goal, the Alliance Coordinating Office will assist each parent center to design a strategic plan for growth and development. Business leaders have participated in various conference calls, presented at the national conference and institute on Management, and assisted with technical activities.

To aid in the development of a positive national media campaign, the Coordinating Office will assist the regional centers in developing means to publicize the benefits of education for children with disabilities and the assistance that is available through the parent centers. A media consultant is currently working with the project on a media campaign.

**Data Collection and Evaluation**

The Coordinating office of the Alliance Project collects and reports information on the impact of the Parent Centers. Data packets consisting of parent phone surveys, parent workshop surveys and other data are collected from parent centers across the country.

An outside consultant conducted an evaluation of the Alliance Project in Years 1, 2, 3, and 4. Results from Years 1, 2 and 3 were tabulated and disseminated to each parent center. Regional Centers and the Coordinating Office together develop work plans, material development and conference planning based on the outcome of the evaluations.

This year an on-line database has been developed to collect the information over the Internet. Once the information is compiled and published, it will be disseminated in a report to OSEP and other agencies on the value and impact of parent centers. The data for Year 4 is currently being compiled and will be disseminated in January 2002.

## Conclusion

During Year 4 of the Alliance Project, the Coordinating office project staff has made 64 presentations reaching 5,575 people. Forty-nine meetings and task forces were held reaching 2,952 people. The project held a 2 ½-day national conference for 350 people. The four regional centers each held their area conferences in May, June and August for 279 people. Four Institutes were held with 170 people attending. More than 92,100 people visited the Alliance's Web site during this reporting period. This has far exceeded the Alliance's goal of reaching 500 people through presentations, 300 people participating at meetings and task forces, 100 people attending the Institutes and 200 people attending the National Conference.

# The TATRA Project
## Technical Assistance About Transition and the Rehabilitation Act

### Introduction

The Technical Assistance about Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA) Project has been providing technical assistance about vocational rehabilitation (VR), independent living and transition issues to parent training projects throughout the United States since 1994. TATRA is funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) through September of 2002. Core TATRA technical assistance and information dissemination activities include:

- Staff development opportunities to build the expertise of parent trainers on transition and vocational rehabilitation topics
- Facilitating communication amongst the RSA parent projects and between these projects and other agencies working with transition-age youth with disabilities and their families
- Disseminating information on promising practices and current issues
- Promoting the development of new parent projects on vocational rehabilitation rights and services

During the past year, RSA-funded parent programs in ten states received individualized technical assistance from the TATRA Project. These include parent information and training projects in Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Texas, Maine, Missouri, Hawaii, and Minnesota. Project PRIDE, a PACER project, conducts the RSA funded training on the Rehabilitation Act and related issues to families in Minnesota. Other parent centers funded by the United States Office of Special Education Programs also benefit from the TATRA Project's information dissemination and technical assistance activities.

### Activities

Over the past year, the TATRA project reached an estimated 267,700 individuals and agencies through individual assistance, technical assistance activities, the project's Web site and newsletter articles. This compares to approximately 136,200 reached during 1999-2000 activities. TATRA responded individually to 176 requests for information and conducted 246 technical assistance activities providing information to 4,952 individuals and agencies. These activities include publication of a national survey; a national conference; both electronic and traditional methods of disseminating of materials and information; redesign and maintenance of a TATRA Project Web site; telephone conferences; and direct assistance to each RSA funded parent training project. TATRA's individualized assistance consists of customized technical assistance plans for each project, financial assistance, research and resource identification, consultation, information and referral, and Center of Expertise support. TATRA also helped plan and host the FAPE Project's October and December 2000 national satellite conferences on transition. Through activities reaching mass audiences including the satellite conferences, PACER's Web site that received over 28,000 visits, the TATRA newsletter, and articles in other print and electronic publications, the TATRA Project potentially reached an additional 262,600 individuals.

**New TATRA e-news service**

In April 2001, the TATRA Project expanded its electronic dissemination activities beyond the RSA-funded parent training projects. In collaboration with the National Center on Secondary Education and Technical Assistance, TATRA launched a new e-mail news service, *Reference Points*. *Reference Points* informs readers about new resources, federal grants, upcoming conferences and emerging issues. The e-mail addresses of all the federally funded parent centers were added to the *Reference Points* mailing list and visitors to the TATRA pages of PACER's Web site can also subscribe on-line. *Reference Points* updates are sent several times a week and reach an ever-growing list of individuals and agencies. Currently there are about 300 e-mail addresses on its mailing list.

**TATRA National Survey**

Last year, TATRA conducted a national needs assessment survey to determine the transition and vocational rehabilitation priorities and technical assistance needs of parent centers across the country. PACER has used this information to guide the development of the transition and vocational rehabilitation technical assistance activities of all its national technical assistance projects. In 2001, the TATRA Project published the survey and distributed it to federally funded parent centers in all fifty states as well as the 10 RSA parent-training programs. It was also disseminated to U.S. Department of Education officials, other national technical assistance projects and policymakers at the federal level. It is also available on the PACER Web site.

**TATRA Annual Conference**

TATRA's annual conference provides staff of the RSA funded parent projects with an opportunity to share information with one another and to hear from consumers, advocates and experts in the fields of transition, employment, vocational rehabilitation and independent living. For the last five years, TATRA has been able to expand the audience reached by its annual conferences by seeking out creative collaborations with other technical assistance projects. This year's TATRA conference was held as a joint capacity building institute with the University of Minnesota's new National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET). NCSET provided funding which enabled TATRA to bring in nationally known speakers, purchase additional conference materials, and most importantly, pay the expenses for parent trainers from ten additional states to attend the conference. Forty-four individuals attended the conference.

TATRA's 2001 annual conference, "2001: A Transition Odyssey", was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This year's conference included sessions on accessing multiple systems (Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Centers, SSI, special education, community programs), federal initiatives providing supports for youth with disabilities, universal design for learning, work incentives, healthcare, community supports, serving youth from immigrant families, young women with disabilities in the juvenile justice system, youth leadership programs, parent involvement at the post-secondary program, career development programs, and arts and cultural opportunities for people with disabilities.

Participants rated "2001: A Transition Odyssey" conference presentations highly. Their evaluations highlighted the quality of the speakers, conference materials, knowledge they gained, networking opportunities, and PACER's new conference facilities. A performance by Interact Theater, an innovative Minneapolis community program that cultivates the creative talents of people with disabilities, was especially well received and considered a highlight of the conference. The following comments are from participant evaluations:

- "Excellent presentations and valuable information"
- "Hadn't thought of accessing non-traditional [non disability] youth programs before"
- "Great resources on transition; excellent materials"
- "Gave me a broader understanding of the need to think "out of the box"
- "Exciting new information; a lot of good ideas from various viewpoints"
- "Plan on incorporating new ideas into our conferences and workshops"

- "Appreciated the practical focus of presentations"
- "Provided me with new insights; generated many ideas to take back home"
- "What a wonderful group of presenters with great information"
- "Tons of good information and lots of inspiration and stimulation"
- "Will have me thinking and growing for a long time"
- "Why haven't I heard of these concepts before?"
- "Encouraging and uplifting"
- "Conference materials will generate more ideas after I return home"
- "This meeting has given me information, resources and contacts with great speakers -- a tremendous help.

**Individualized Technical Assistance**

TATRA staff conducted needs assessment interviews with the ten RSA funded parent information and training projects between October 2000 and May 2001. Following these interviews, Individual Technical Assistance Agreements (ITAGs) were drafted. These agreements outline technical assistance that the TATRA Project will provide in order to help each project build their capacity to meet the transition needs of families in their state. This includes both requests for information and a small amount in funding. This funding enabled the projects to attend national conferences, purchase materials, and pay conference related postage and mileage expense

TATRA provides additional funding support and technical assistance to each project to support the development and ongoing activities of the eight Centers of Expertise. Becoming a TATRA Center of Expertise provides the RSA parent projects with the opportunity to build expertise in areas of existing strength or to explore areas of special interest. TATRA's Centers of Expertise have developed fact sheets on a number of topics: Vocational and Post-secondary Education; Underserved Populations (Including Rural Populations), Person Centered Planning; Self Determination; Personal Assistance Services, Transportation; Independent Living; the Americans with Disabilities Act, School-to-Work programs, Housing, Client Assistance Projects, Interagency Collaboration and Transition, and Cross Cultural Training. Center of Expertise articles on these topics are posted on TATRA's Web site (**www.pacer.org/tatra/tatra.htm**). In addition to producing articles, projects present workshops on their Centers of Expertise at TATRA conferences.

TATRA also provides RSA parent-training projects with information and resources to further broaden their expertise. Information about on-line resources such as web sites, courses and materials that can be accessed from the web, free and low-cost publications and videos available by mail; web accessibility; scholarship and internships for youth with disabilities; funding for assistive technology; regulations, and conferences on relevant topics were disseminated on a weekly basis to projects via a newly developed listserv. Hard copies of publications by PACER and other agencies are sent to projects by U.S. mail in monthly mailings. Projects received materials on a range of topics including Workforce Centers and vocational rehabilitation programs, transition services, Social Security Work Incentives, IDEA related issues such age-of-majority and alternative assessments; adult education; accommodations for GED testing; assistive technology funding; education reform; international travel opportunities for youth with disabilities; substance abuse and people with disabilities, sexuality issues; housing; and model.

***Point of Departure***

TATRA's newsletter, *Point of Departure,* focuses on student and family involvement in transition and employment planning for youth with disabilities. The newsletter is sent to a mailing list of approximately 2,900 individuals and organizations including the RSA parent training projects, OSEP funded parent centers, and other government, education and vocational rehabilitation professionals. The most recent issue, September 2000, featured the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues' 2000 conference, TATRA's national survey of parent centers, youth and Workforce Centers, IDEA '97 transition requirements, the National Resource Center for Parents with Disabilities, updates on recent legislation, a Smithsonian exhibit on the disability rights movement, and resources for parent trainers and others who work with youth with disabilities and their families.

## Conclusion

The TATRA Project continues to increase the number of individuals reached by its technical assistance activities. This growth has been possible for a number of reasons: utilizing PACER's widely distributed *PACESETTER* newsletter to disseminate information about transition and vocational rehabilitation and the TATRA Project; expanding relationships with federally funded technical assistance projects addressing transition issues and the use of modern information dissemination technology such as satellite conferences, e-mail and the Internet in TATRA activities. These strategies, in addition to both more traditional and more individualized forms of technical assistance delivery such as conferences and individual technical assistance plans, have enabled TATRA to nearly double the number of individuals it served over the past year.

# FAPE
# Families & Advocates Partnership for Education

The Families and Advocates Partnership for Education began on October 1, 1998 funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The purpose of the Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE) project is to communicate the new focus of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in order to improve educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. A primary goal of IDEA '97 is to ensure that children with disabilities receive a quality education.

The FAPE project, through its partnership with 11 national organizations, 21 Community Partners and 14 Extended Network Partners is making a tremendous impact on the education and ultimately the lives of the nation's 6 million children and young adults with disabilities. The information and training that this grant produces is critical to achieving better educational opportunities for children with disabilities, which are the goals of the reauthorized IDEA. FAPE links families, advocates, and self-advocates. The project

- Helps families of children with disabilities understand and use IDEA;
- Works with agencies, organizations and families to promote the best ways to help children with disabilities learn;
- Ensures broad understanding of IDEA through effective networking, marketing, and outreach activities.

FAPE's coordinating office is located at PACER Center. It is one of four projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education to reach parents, administrators, service providers and policymakers nationwide with information about implementing IDEA '97. To accomplish this, FAPE is helping parents of children with disabilities by providing:

- Written information about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97) for families and advocates.
- A Web site (**www.fape.org**) with information on IDEA '97, including Spanish and Hmong translations of selected on-line documents and printed materials.
- Training on IDEA '97 and related topics at workshops, brown bag seminars and satellite videoconferences and on-line training on the Internet.
- Referrals to national state and local disability organizations and advocates and to a nationwide network of parent training and information centers and community parent resource centers for information on IDEA '97.
- Information on research about best practices that can be used to improve educational services.
- A toll-free telephone number, 1-888-248-0822, for technical assistance on IDEA '97.

**The Partnership informs and provides support to families and advocates through a partnership among families and disability organizations.**

During the reporting period of (July 1, 2000—June 30, 2001), FAPE Coordinating Office, Core and Community Partners have provided assistance to 11,618 individuals and/or organizations. FAPE Coordinating Office provided assistance to 3,716 individuals and/or organizations and Core and Community Partners have provided assistance to 7,902 individuals and/or organizations. Follow-up impact data was collected from 208 persons who received individual phone assistance, 97.4% said the information they received was helpful, 91.5% said they felt more confident in their ability to work with schools, 86.1% said the information they received

enabled them to obtain at least some of the services they felt their child needs, and 82.6% said they did not feel they could have received the assistance they needed had "these" services not been available.

During this same reporting period the FAPE Coordinating Office and Partners have conducted 213 presentations; discussions and/or trainings on IDEA '97 related topics reaching 15,914 individuals. The following is a break down by quarter and type of presentation:

**Presentations at National and Statewide Conferences**

| Coordinating Office and Partners | Workshops | Individuals |
|---|---|---|
| 4th quarter (7/1/00-9/30/00) | 31 | 2,288 |
| 1st quarter (10/1/00-12/31/00) | 31 | 4,758 |
| 2nd quarter (01/01/01-3/31/01) | 21 | 2,542 |
| 3rd quarter (4/1/01-6/30/01) | 26 | 3,048 |
| Total | 109 | 12,636 |

**Presentations/Workshops at the Local Level**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4th quarter (7/1/00-9/30/00) | 22 | 669 |
| 1st quarter (10/1/00-12/31/00) | 17 | 627 |
| 2nd quarter (01/01/01-3/31/01) | 26 | 521 |
| 3rd quarter (4/1/01-6/30/01) | 39 | 1,461 |
| Total | 104 | 3,278 |

Evaluations of these workshops were collected from 799 participants who ranked the usefulness of the training as 4.8 on a 5-point scale. Follow-up workshop interviews were conducted with 224 participants; 99.5% said the workshop information presented was useful, 90.5% said they better understand IDEA '97 as a result of attending the workshop, 76.3% said they had been able to use the information from the workshop, and 72.9% said their child's IEP or education had changed or they had received more appropriate services as a result of attending the workshop.

**Outreach Plan**

FAPE has developed and is implementing an outreach plan to identify and implement strategies to ensure that all underrepresented families receive useful information. To accomplish this goal, curricula and information resources have been translated into Spanish and some materials have been translated into Hmong. Workshops have been developed that are specific to the needs of parents of children attending BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) schools.

| Date | Location | Attending |
|---|---|---|
| 8/17/00 | St. Stephens, WY | 41 |
| 8/18/00 | St. Stephens, WY | 32 |
| 1/17-21/01 | Phoenix, AZ | 18 |
| 1/29/01 | Riverton, WY | 70 |
| 3/19-21/01 | San Diego, CA | 100 |
| 04/18/01 | Moapa Reservation, Las Vegas, NV | 22 |
| Total | | 283 |

**The Partnership promotes research-based best practices that positively impact results for children with disabilities in accessing challenging curricula meeting high expectations, realizing success through ongoing assessment of progress and increasing the involvement of parents and disability advocates in children's programs.**

To accomplish this goal, the Coordinating Office and the Core Partners have created a web site to facilitate the dissemination of information and materials not only for each other, but also for any of the parent projects to access. During FAPE's reporting period, its Web site has had 112,697 visits. To assist families in obtaining a good education for their children, FAPE has developed several family-friendly articles (available on the web site) that have been vetted by the U.S. Office of Special Education and Programs.

| Month | Number of Visits |
|---|---|
| 07/00 | 8181 |
| 08/00 | 7011 |
| 09/00 | 7607 |
| 10/00 | 8023 |
| 11/00 | 8813 |
| 12/00 | 6149 |
| 01/01 | 8302 |
| 02/01 | 10301 |
| 02/01 | 12238 |
| 04/01 | 11613 |
| 05/01 | 12388 |
| 06/01 | 12071 |
| Total | 112697 |

**The Partnership maintains effective and efficient networking, marketing and outreach activities that ensure broad-based understanding of the 1997 IDEA changes and promote proper implementation at the state and local levels.**

To accomplish this goal, FAPE Coordinating office has already implemented the development of a National Business Advisory Board. The board will help in defining school outcomes needed for successful employment opportunities for youth with disabilities.

A marketing plan has been developed to address the needs of families. FAPE has trained Parent Information Centers and other groups to provide information about IDEA '97 that will help to improve outcomes in the educational process for youth with disabilities.

To help promote IDEA '97 and ensure broad-based understanding of the law and its changes, the Coordinating Office and the Core Partners have disseminated information about IDEA '97 through newsletters and press releases reaching over 3,867,800 individuals. A toll free number has been set up 1-888-248-0822 which parents, advocates and others can use.

## Conclusion

The FAPE Project is effective at providing support to families, advocates and self-advocates in understanding the changes to IDEA, the implications of these changes and their role in improving results for children with disabilities. The presence of FAPE and its Partners, including PTIs and CPRCs, has extended to every state and has demonstrated success in reaching underserved and underrepresented families. FAPE has demonstrated leadership in establishing and implementing the Partnership Coordinating Committee (PCC) of the linking partners and in promoting collaboration. As one person wrote, " Your materials and resources are very helpful to our national and affiliate staff in assisting people with epilepsy throughout the country."

# **CADRE** - Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education

CADRE's (Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education) purpose is to provide information, training, and technical assistance (TA) to states, schools, parents and teachers to enable them to resolve disputes through more expedient and less confrontational means, including mediation.

This project responds to the 13 task elements of the absolute priority using creative and innovative approaches to organizational design and management, delivery of technical assistance, use of advanced communications technology and the synergistic involvement of project clientele in the development, use and improvement of CADRE products and services.

CADRE is composed of leading individuals and organizations in the field whose expertise and experience will be leveraged to provide efficient, effective and high quality technical assistance to diverse stakeholders. CADRE's core partners include:

- National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
- Academy for Educational Development/National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (AED/NICHCY)
- Mediation Information and Resource Center (MIRC) and
- (The) Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (the Alliance) located at PACER Center.

These organizations provide a unique blend of essential constituents (parents and professionals), whose expertise about technical assistance delivery, and the use of high quality professional information provides knowledge on dispute resolution.

CADRE uses electronic technology to reach project clientele with high quality information and technical assistance. Extensive use is made of the Internet and web-based services such as e-mail, dissemination of information and products via the web, and interactive web conferencing. For those who do not have Internet access, regional training, and telephone information services (541-686-5060), along with conference presentations and print document dissemination are made available by CADRE.

CADRE's Technical Assistance is designed to:

- Increase the awareness about the use of a range of alternative dispute resolution procedures
- Motivate parents, schools, and states to utilize appropriate dispute resolution procedures to identify and resolve differences
- Stimulate and support state and local efforts to resolve differences as early and effectively as possible.

The Alliance Project located at PACER Center and its four Regional Centers, as part of CADRE, have designated a staff person from each of the Regional Centers and the Coordinating Office to work directly with the CADRE project.

The Alliance Project and the CADRE project jointly developed a booklet for use by parent centers entitled, *Special Education Mediation: A Guide for Parents*. Two hundred copies of the guide were sent to each of the parent centers. They requested additional copies for a total of 23,000 copies being distributed. In addition the guide will be available on the Alliance Web site (**www.taalliance.org**) and the CADRE Web site (**www.directionservice.org/CADRE**). Alliance staff served on the Advisory Committee for the National Symposium on Dispute Resolution in Special Education which was held November 29-December 1, 2000 in Washington DC. Alliance staff assisted in identifying and supporting the attendance of 40 participants representing parent training and information centers and community parent resource centers at the CADRE National Symposium. The Coordinating Office and the regional offices of the Alliance Project have added numerous resources to the Alliance database about the topic of special education mediation and dispute resolution. Several drafts of a script for a video have been written. The video will focus on ways to assist families prepare for special education mediation. The 10-minute video will be family and user-friendly explaining what to expect in mediation, some of the benefits of mediation, and the role and responsibilities of the mediator.

# Parent Training Project
## Level I: Individual Assistance

PACER received over 23,500 telephone and mail communications from parents of children with disabilities, professionals, and others from June 1, 2000, to May 31, 2001, for **all** its projects including the Parent Training Program. The communications included requests for general information, referral, inquiries about workshops or other presentations, and requests for individual advocacy assistance.

PACER's national Technical Assistance programs received 1454 calls (included in the 23,569), but some of their communication is now being conducted at their Web sites. These sites had over 204,800 visits. The numbers can include multiple contacts from the same individuals. PACER new database is still being developed and these numbers may not reflect all the calls that PACER has received during this transition period.

PACER began its World Wide Web site, (**www.pacer.org**), in September 1996. From September 1996 through May 31, 1997, the site received 15,675 visits. During this past year, the site estimated that it has received over 237,400 visits through May 31, 2001. The Alliance Project had more than 92,100 visits, and the FAPE project received more than 112,600. All three of these Web sites are monitored at PACER for a total of more than 442,100 visits. The TATRA Project, that is national in scope, but is accessed through PACER's home page, received over 28,000 visits.

**Summary of telephone and mail communications for the Parent Training Project**
**Number of communication intakes received each month**

| Month | Parents | Prof. | Cons. | Advocate | Other | Total | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/2000 | 330 | 213 | 3 | 3 | 76 | 625 | 5% |
| 07/2000 | 314 | 212 | 3 | 1 | 82 | 612 | 5% |
| 08/2000 | 362 | 219 | 3 | 1 | 80 | 665 | 6% |
| 09/2000 | 574 | 256 | 1 | 3 | 111 | 945 | 8% |
| 10/2000 | 642 | 328 | 1 | 2 | 134 | 1107 | 10% |
| 11/2000 | 462 | 228 | 1 | 2 | 99 | 792 | 7% |
| 12/2000 | 403 | 205 | 1 | 3 | 83 | 695 | 6% |
| 01/2001 | 559 | 311 | 1 | 3 | 125 | 999 | 9% |
| 02/2001 | 686 | 363 | 3 | 1 | 162 | 1215 | 11% |
| 03/2001 | 924 | 419 | 4 | 1 | 212 | 1560 | 14% |
| 04/2001 | 690 | 258 | 1 | 1 | 121 | 1071 | 10% |
| 05/2001 | 544 | 263 | 1 | 1 | 149 | 958 | 9% |
| Total | 6490 | 3275 | 23 | 22 | 1434 | 11244 | 100% |
| | (58%) | (29%) | (<1%) | (<1%) | (13%) | (100%) | |

**Summary of telephone and mail communications for all of PACER's Projects**
**Number of communication intakes received each month**

| Month | Parents | Prof. | Cons. | Advocate | Other | Total | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/2000 | 491 | 445 | 3 | 5 | 135 | 1079 | 5% |
| 07/2000 | 480 | 513 | 3 | 2 | 214 | 1212 | 5% |
| 08/2000 | 565 | 535 | 3 | 1 | 157 | 1261 | 5% |
| 09/2000 | 824 | 531 | 1 | 4 | 163 | 1523 | 7% |
| 10/2000 | 1032 | 678 | 4 | 5 | 265 | 1984 | 8% |
| 11/2000 | 783 | 556 | 6 | 3 | 237 | 1585 | 7% |
| 12/2000 | 602 | 588 | 7 | 3 | 184 | 1384 | 6% |
| 01/2001 | 1083 | 743 | 14 | 7 | 327 | 2174 | 9% |
| 02/2001 | 1134 | 948 | 21 | 10 | 415 | 2528 | 11% |
| 03/2001 | 1828 | 1149 | 16 | 14 | 586 | 3593 | 15% |
| 04/2001 | 1422 | 745 | 18 | 36 | 630 | 2851 | 12% |
| 05/2001 | 1147 | 640 | 8 | 11 | 589 | 2395 | 10% |
| Total | 11391 | 8071 | 104 | 101 | 3902 | 23569 | 100% |
| | (49%) | (34%) | (<1%) | (<1%) | (17%) | (100%) | |

"Parents" includes parents and certain relatives of children and youth with disabilities, foster parents, surrogate parents and group home house parents. "Professionals" includes primarily school district and regional educational personnel. "Advocates" include representatives of disability organizations, legal advocates, and persons who have taken PACER's advocacy training. Many of the advocates are parents of children with disabilities, but were counted as advocates when their inquiry dealt with children other than their own.

## Total Communication Intakes by Regions

Minnesota is divided into planning regions that are also used as special education administrative regions. All 12 regions of Minnesota, out-of-state and out of the country are represented in the 23,596 communications calls or letters that all of PACER received.

| Region – **Parent Training** | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| West Metro: Minneapolis 11W | 3794 | 34% |
| East Metro: St. Paul 11E | 2315 | 20% |
| Southeast – Region 10 | 602 | 5% |
| South Central – Region 9 | 348 | 3% |
| Southwest – Region 8 | 507 | 4% |
| Central – Region 7 | 730 | 6% |
| West Central – Region 6 | 206 | 2% |
| North Central – Region 5 | 94 | 1% |
| West – Region 4 | 186 | 2% |
| Northeast – Region 3 | 227 | 2% |
| Northwest – Region 2 | 93 | 1% |
| Far Northwest – Region 1 | 77 | 1% |
| Out of State | 1761 | 16% |
| Out of Country | 6 | <1% |
| Information not available | 298 | 3% |
| Total | 11244 | 100% |

| Region – **All of PACER** | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| West Metro: Minneapolis 11W | 7877 | 33% |
| East Metro: St. Paul 11E | 4386 | 19% |
| Southeast – Region 10 | 1079 | 5% |
| South Central – Region 9 | 738 | 3% |
| Southwest – Region 8 | 933 | 4% |
| Central – Region 7 | 1459 | 6% |
| West Central – Region 6 | 402 | 2% |
| North Central – Region 5 | 258 | 1% |
| West – Region 4 | 481 | 2% |
| Northeast – Region 3 | 491 | 2% |
| Northwest – Region 2 | 293 | 1% |
| Far Northwest – Region 1 | 211 | 1% |
| Out of State | 4349 | 18% |
| Out of Country | 11 | <1% |
| Information not available | 601 | 3% |
| Total | 23569 | 100% |

## Types of information and education services requested

There were 23,569 telephone and mail intakes for **all** of PACER's projects, 16,747 (71%) included requests for individual assistance and information and education. There were 11,244 telephone and mail intakes for Parent Training only of those 9,533 (85%) were requests for individual assistance and information and referral. Many single intakes included more than one type of request.

| **Parent Training Project** | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Individual Assistance | 5471 | 49% |
| Information & Referral | 4062 | 36% |
| Other | 1711 | 15% |
| Total | 11244 | 100% |

| **All of PACER's Projects** | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Individual Assistance | 9265 | 39% |
| Information & Referral | 7482 | 32% |
| Other | 6822 | 29% |
| Total | 23569 | 100% |

The following information is kept by PACER but not required for requests when asking for information or education:

Sex of child/children whose parent called PACER:

| **Parent Training** | | | **All of PACER** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 1791 | 25% | Female | 2689 | 24% |
| Male | 4503 | 64% | Male | 6974 | 64% |
| Unknown | 781 | 11% | Unknown | 1294 | 12% |
| Total | 7075 | 100% | Total | 10957 | 100% |

Age of child/children whose parent called:

| **Parent Training** | | | **All of PACER** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Birth to 3 | 133 | 2% | Birth to 3 | 486 | 4% |
| 4 to 5 | 227 | 3% | 4 to 5 | 689 | 5% |
| 6 to 11 | 2553 | 32% | 6 to 11 | 3723 | 29% |
| 12 to 14 | 1889 | 24% | 12 to 14 | 2600 | 21% |
| 15 to 18 | 1842 | 23% | 15 to 18 | 2763 | 22% |
| 19 to 22 | 431 | 6% | 19 to 22 | 696 | 5% |
| Over 22 | 163 | 2% | Over 22 | 284 | 2% |
| Unknown | 622 | 8% | Unknown | 1481 | 12% |
| Total | 7860 | 100% | Total | 12722 | 100% |

**Parent Training**

| Primary disability of the child | Disability | | Intakes per disability | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learning Disabilities | 351 | 12% | 780 | 14% |
| ADD/ADHD – Other health imp. | 342 | 12% | 610 | 11% |
| EBD | 292 | 10% | 613 | 11% |
| Autism | 279 | 10% | 643 | 11% |
| Other Health Impairments | 213 | 7% | 420 | 8% |
| ADD/ADHD – EBD | 208 | 8% | 412 | 8% |
| Mental Retardation | 190 | 6% | 383 | 6% |
| ADD/ADHD – LD | 133 | 5% | 250 | 4% |
| Suspected Disability | 117 | 4% | 188 | 4% |
| ADD/ADHD – Regular Ed. | 96 | 4% | 145 | 3% |
| Orthopedic Impairments | 85 | 3% | 115 | 2% |
| Speech and Language | 71 | 2% | 137 | 2% |
| Hearing Impaired | 69 | 2% | 253 | 4% |
| DD (early/rehab) | 65 | 2% | 97 | 1% |
| Multiple Disabilities | 61 | 2% | 104 | 1% |
| ADD/ADHD – Section 504 | 57 | 2% | 120 | 2% |
| Deafness | 44 | 2% | 116 | 2% |
| Traumatic Brain Injury | 37 | 1% | 64 | 1% |
| Mental Illness (Rehab) | 34 | 1% | 44 | 1% |
| Visual Impairment/Blindness | 27 | 1% | 34 | 1% |
| Deaf/Blind | 18 | <1% | 21 | <1% |
| Other | 111 | 4% | 152 | 3% |
| Total | 2,900 | 100% | 5,701 | 100% |

| All of PACER<br>Primary disability of the child | Disability | | Intakes<br>per disability | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EBD | 434 | 11% | 1086 | 12% |
| ADD/ADHD – Other health imp. | 422 | 11% | 881 | 10% |
| Learning Disabilities | 398 | 10% | 984 | 11% |
| Autism | 371 | 10% | 1079 | 12% |
| ADD/ADHD – EBD | 299 | 8% | 708 | 8% |
| Other Health Impairments | 295 | 8% | 627 | 7% |
| Mental Retardation | 252 | 7% | 591 | 7% |
| ADD/ADHD – LD | 149 | 4% | 366 | 4% |
| Suspected Disability | 140 | 4% | 271 | 3% |
| DD (early/rehab) | 135 | 4% | 250 | 3% |
| Orthopedic Impairments | 131 | 3% | 214 | 2% |
| ADD/ADHD – Regular Ed. | 122 | 3% | 178 | 2% |
| Speech and Language | 103 | 3% | 227 | 3% |
| Multiple Disabilities | 87 | 2% | 185 | 2% |
| Hearing Impaired | 86 | 2% | 323 | 4% |
| ADD/ADHD – Section 504 | 64 | 2% | 151 | 2% |
| Traumatic Brain Injury | 43 | 1% | 90 | 1% |
| Deafness | 42 | 1% | 189 | 2% |
| Mental Illness (Rehab) | 40 | 1% | 83 | 1% |
| Visual Impairment/Blindness | 36 | 1% | 57 | 1% |
| Deaf/Blind | 19 | <1% | 34 | <1% |
| Other | 168 | 4% | 292 | 3% |
| Total | 3,836 | 100% | 8,866 | 100% |

**Number of requests for individual advocacy assistance**

PACER's Parent Training Project received 11,244 calls and of those 5,471 (49%) were calls requesting specifically "individual assistance" but all of Parent Training calls require individual assistance by the parent advocates. All of PACER's programs received calls from 9,265 people who requested "individual assistance," or 39 percent of the 23,569 telephone calls and mail. These included questions relating to the educational needs of individual children. A large number of inquiries focused on the content and planning of IEPs; other questions dealt with assessments, transition planning, Section 504 and juvenile justice.

**Follow-up survey**

A follow-up survey was conducted by telephone with 29 parents randomly selected who had received telephone assistance from PACER in response to a question about the education of their child with a disability. The ages and primary disabilities of the children of the survey respondents correspond generally with the ages and disabilities of the children of other parents with whom PACER has had contact, even though the survey participants were chosen randomly.

- Eighty-six percent (86%) found the information that they received on the telephone very helpful, 3.5% felt they were moderately helpful and 3.5% slightly helpful and the question was not applicable for 7%.
- Ninety percent (90%) felt that they were more confident in their ability to work with the schools after speaking with PACER.
- Ninety-three percent (93%) believe that the information they received enabled them to obtain at least some of the services they felt their child needed.
- Eighty-six percent (86%) felt that they would not have received the assistance that they needed if

PACER's services had not been available.

Some of the comments included:

- When asked how helpful the phone information was, "Awesome! Gave good suggestions"
- "I felt like a man in the wilderness without a compass. The advocate gave good suggestions."
- When asked if they could have received the assistance without PACER's help, a parent said, "Possibly, but advocates gave excellent ideas on how to proceed."
- Parent felt that "advocate was always there for not only their daughter, but for the whole family."
- "PACER is a unique organization and that's why we went there."
- "I wouldn't have known where to look, not a clue where to go (without PACER)."

## Conclusion

Requests for information and assistance continue to increase for all of PACER's programs, and questions are becoming more complex. PACER assisted parents in numbers that far exceeded the Parent Training federal grant goal of reaching 6,500 to 7,500 people for 2000-2001. A random sample of 29 parents indicated that a large majority of those served found the information helpful, felt more confident in working with schools after talking with PACER, were able to obtain at least some needed services for their child through use of information received from PACER, and felt they could not have received the assistance they needed had PACER's services not been available.

# Parent Training Project
## Level II: Workshops for parents, special groups

PACER conducted 49 Level II workshops in 2000-2001, reaching 1,016 people. Level II workshops are primarily for parents of children with disabilities. Some Level II workshops are for special groups of parents (such as those whose children are preschool age or have a particular disability) or are on special topics.

Workshops focus on parents and children's rights in special education, with information on assessment, parent involvement in planning individualized education plans (IEP), resolving disagreements, and parent-school communication. Workshop participants receive a packet of information, which contains material about the workshop and on special education laws.

Special topic workshops included presentations on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, with specific information on the law's impact for students with attention deficit disorder (ADHD); the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), ADHD; financial planning; assistive technology; the state graduation standards; and communication skills.

### Special Workshops

PACER presented two sessions for parents featuring a nationally known outstanding speaker Rebecca Kajander, CPNP, MPH. Her topics were "Living with ADHD, What We Know, What Can We Do?" for 108 people on September 26, 2000 and again on April 26, 2001 with "Learning and Living with ADHD" for 126 individuals.

### IDEA Amendments

PACER staff received many requests to do workshops on IDEA Amendment 97. The most frequently requested workshop this year was the IEP workshop.

### Service Expansion

Parent Training services continued this year in greater Minnesota through part-time staff in the Marshall area in southwestern Minnesota and on the White Earth Indian Reservation.

### Level II Basic and Specialized Workshops

There were a total of 1,016 individuals that included 823 parents of children with disabilities who attended the 49 Level II basic and specialized workshops.

PACER presented 28 basic workshops reaching 444 people including 329 parents of students with disabilities. PACER's projected goal in its federal grant was to reach 275 to 375 persons at 7 to 10 basic workshops.

**Basic Workshops**

| Date | Location | Type | Parent | Prof. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 07/10/00 | Rochester | Basic Rights I | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| 08/19/00 | Montevideo | Basic Rights I | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| 09/18/00 | Rochester | IEP | 14 | 5 | 19 |
| 09/19/00 | Stewartville | Basic Rights I | 12 | 2 | 14 |
| 09/23/00 | Brainerd | IEP | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| 10/02/00 | St. James | IEP | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| 10/03/00 | Mankato | IEP | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| 10/16/00 | Moorhead | Basic Rights I | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| 10/17/00 | Wadena | IEP | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| 11/02/00 | Richfield | Basic Rights I | 22 | 12 | 34 |
| 11/09/00 | St. Paul | Basic Rights I | 15 | 8 | 23 |
| 11/13/00 | Montgomery | IEP and Section 504 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 01/13/01 | Minneapolis* | Grad Standards & Section 504 | 17 | 16 | 33 |
| 01/25/01 | Shakopee | IEP | 12 | 1 | 13 |
| 02/01/01 | Fridley | IEP | 29 | 13 | 42 |
| 02/06/01 | Richfield | IEP | 21 | 7 | 28 |
| 02/13/01 | Northfield | Basic Rights I | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| 02/27/01 | Princeton | Basic Rights I | 22 | 0 | 22 |
| 03/06/01 | St. Paul | IEP | 28 | 13 | 41 |
| 03/12/01 | Detroit Lakes | Basic Rights | 9 | 2 | 11 |
| 03/13/01 | Alexandria | Basic Rights | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| 03/27/01 | Albert Lea | Grad Standards & Transition | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 03/29/01 | Red Wing | Basic Rights I | 6 | 7 | 13 |
| 04/02/01 | St. Cloud | Basic Rights I | 11 | 2 | 13 |
| 04/09/01 | New Ulm | Basic Rights I | 8 | 3 | 11 |
| 04/10/01 | Hutchinson | IEP | 16 | 8 | 24 |
| 04/19/01 | Bloomington | Basic Rights II | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| 05/09/01 | Duluth | IEP | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| Total | | | 329 | 115 | 444 |

*Minnesota State grant

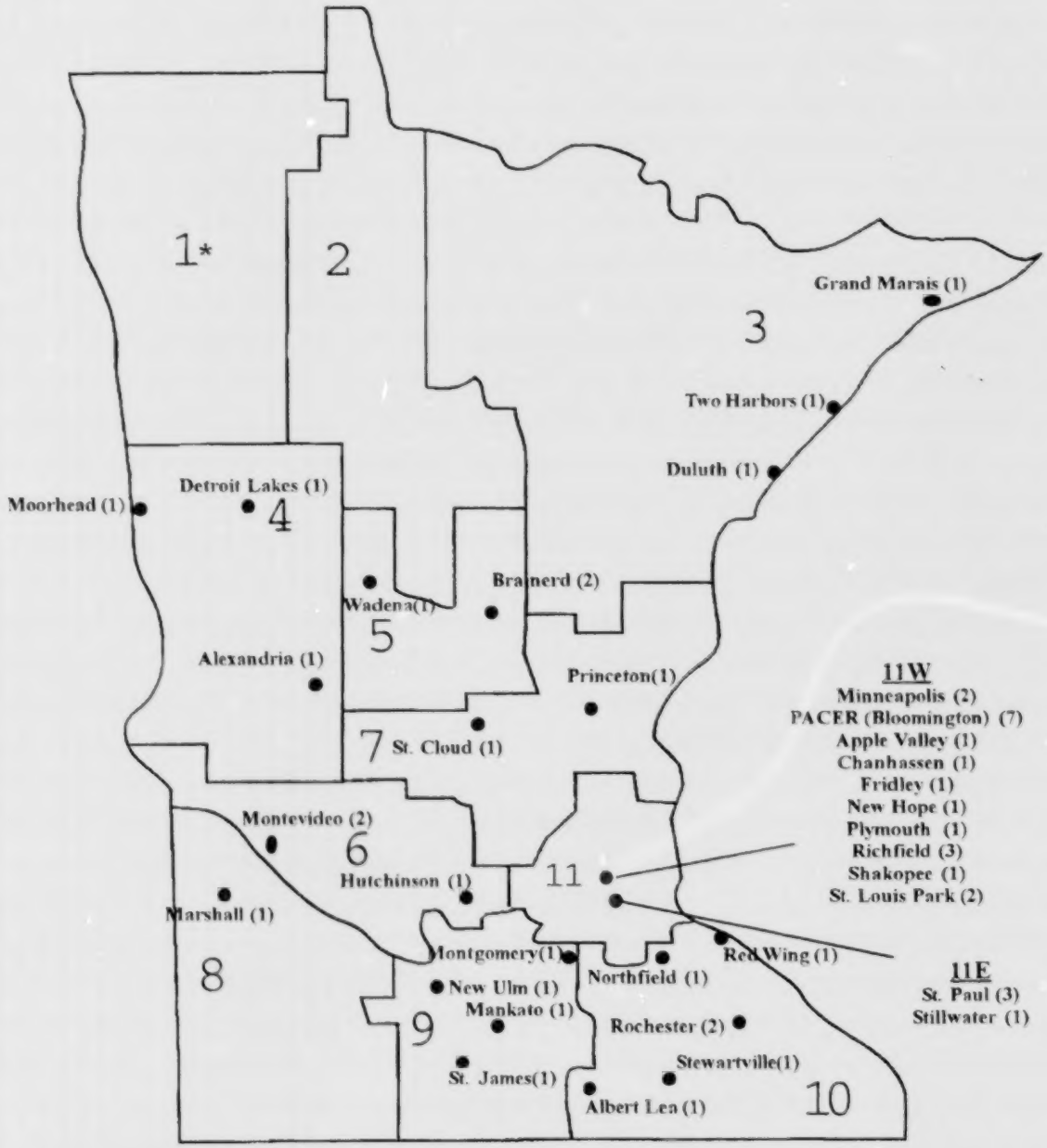
**Specialized Workshops**

PACER goal was to provide 15 to 20 specialized workshops for 400 to 500 parents of students with disabilities and others. The 21 specialized workshops reached 572 individuals of whom 494 were parents.

These workshops were presented to young and new parents, transition age students and their parents, parents organized around specific disabilities, parents' groups organized in connection with a school or medical facility, grandparents, and parents concerned with future planning.

The need for information and support regarding concerns and issues surrounding communication and graduation standards is reflected in participation in special workshops on these topics.

## Level II Workshop Sites




* Large numbers indicate state's special education districts

| Date | Location | Topic | Parent | Profs. | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/20/00 | New Hope | IDEA | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 08/02/00 | Montevideo | Transition | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| 08/22/00 | St. Paul | IDEA | 10 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| 09/23/00 | Brainerd | Communication Skills | 24 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| 09/26/00 | Richfield | Living with ADHD | 90 | 16 | 2 | 108 |
| 10/24/00 | Marshall | CTIC | 2 | 5 | 0 | 7 |
| 02/19/01 | Apple Valley | Down Syndrome Group | 20 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 03/01/01 | Stillwater | Section 504 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 16 |
| 03/03/01 | Bloomington | How do I know if my Child/Progress | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 03/05/01 | St. Louis Park | ADHD: 504 & Special Education | 5 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| 03/06/01 | Bloomington | Wills, Trusts, Long-term Health Care | 56 | 0 | 0 | 56 |
| 03/08/01 | Bloomington | Life Planning | 76 | 0 | 0 | 76 |
| 03/22/01 | St. Louis Park | Parent Rights | 8 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| 04/07/01 | Bloomington | Extended School Year | 14 | 1 | 0 | 15 |
| 04/24/01 | Minneapolis | Minnesota Prader Willie Conference | 18 | 2 | 0 | 20 |
| 04/26/01 | Bloomington | Living with ADHD | 99 | 27 | 0 | 126 |
| 04/28/01 | Plymouth | Minnesota PTA Annual Conference | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| 05/07/01 | Two Harbors | Communication Skills | 10 | 8 | 0 | 18 |
| 05/08/01 | Grand Marais | Communication Skills | 6 | 2 | 0 | 8 |
| 05/12/01 | Bloomington | Positive Behavior Interventions | 17 | 6 | 0 | 23 |
| 05/19/01 | Chanhassen | IEP Issues | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Total | | | 494 | 76 | 2 | 572 |

**Evaluation by participants**

Workshop evaluations were completed by 459 people of the total of 614 individuals who attended 30 of the Level II workshops. An evaluation summary follows. (When "responses" exceed surveys returned, participants have given more than one response per question.)

1. Who attended the workshops?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parent/relative of child with disability | 363 | 64% |
| Special educator or administrator | 50 | 9% |
| Staff member of agency | 48 | 8% |
| Regular educator or administrator | 28 | 5% |
| Individual with a disability | 13 | 2% |
| Foster parent | 22 | 4% |
| Other * | 42 | 8% |
| Total ** | 566 | 100% |

* Surrogate parents, social workers, doctors, students, aides, nurses, friends, volunteers, advocates

** Some of the respondents were listed under more than one category.

1. What is the age of your child with a disability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Birth to 3 years | 23 | 6% |
| 4 to 5 | 37 | 10% |
| 6 to 11 | 160 | 41% |
| 12 to 14 | 101 | 26% |
| 15 to 18 | 57 | 15% |
| 19 to 22 | 4 | 1% |
| 23 and older | 3 | 1% |
| Total | 385 | 100% |

2. What is your child's primary handicapping condition?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ADD/ADHD | 151 | 25% |
| Learning disability | 75 | 12% |
| Autism | 47 | 8% |
| Speech/language | 46 | 8% |
| Deaf/hard of hearing | 41 | 7% |
| Mental retardation, developmental disability, Down syndrome | 36 | 6% |
| EBD | 35 | 6% |
| Neurological impairment | 27 | 4% |
| EBD (ADHD) | 26 | 4% |
| Multiple disabilities | 20 | 3% |
| Orthopedic impairment | 12 | 2% |
| Health impairment | 10 | 2% |
| Visual/blindness | 7 | 1% |
| Traumatic brain injury | 3 | 1% |
| Suspected disability | 3 | 1% |
| Other | 58 | 10% |
| Total* | 597 | 100% |

* More than one answer may have been given

3. On the whole, how would you rate this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 192 | 42% |
| Very good | 218 | 48% |
| Good | 48 | 10% |
| Fair | 1 | <1% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 459 | 100% |

4. Have you learned anything new from this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 308 | 100% |
| No | 1 | <1% |
| Total | 309 | 100% |

5. Has this workshop helped?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 273 | 98% |
| No | 6 | 2% |
| Total | 279 | 100% |

6. How did you find out about this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| PACER | 303 | 62% |
| Flyer, other organization | 40 | 8% |
| Flyer, school | 46 | 9% |
| Friend | 38 | 8% |
| Parent group | 14 | 3% |
| Newspaper | 6 | 1% |
| Other * | 45 | 9% |
| Total ** | 492 | 100% |

* Teachers, social workers, physicians, fellow workers, family member, etc.

** May have responded to more than one category.

7. Would you like to receive special training to be an advocate for children with disabilities?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 86 | 30% |
| No | 199 | 70% |
| Total | 285 | 100% |

8. If you were interested in attending another workshop, what topics would interest you?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ADHD | 184 | 15% |
| EBD | 140 | 11% |
| Section 504 | 106 | 9% |
| Communications | 99 | 8% |
| IEP | 94 | 8% |
| Assistive technology | 78 | 6% |
| Siblings | 68 | 6% |
| Transition | 65 | 5% |
| Inclusion | 62 | 5% |
| Discipline | 54 | 4% |
| Early childhood | 52 | 4% |
| Graduation Standards | 43 | 3% |
| SSI | 36 | 3% |
| Services for adults | 33 | 3% |
| Supported employment | 26 | 2% |
| Disability Information | 15 | 1% |
| School reform | 4 | <1% |
| Other | 84 | 7% |
| Total* | 1,243 | 100% |

*More than one answer may have been given.

**Follow-up survey of parents, workshop participants**

During 2000-2001, telephone calls were made to 27 people who had attended Level II workshops during this period. The purpose of the follow-up surveys was (l) to determine how the participants evaluated the services they received, and (2) to determine whether parents were able to use the information that they had received. Parents were chosen randomly from registration lists of 1,016 persons who attended of PACER's Level II workshops.

The ages and primary disabilities of the children of the survey respondents correspond generally with the ages and disabilities of the children of other parents with whom PACER has had contact, even though the survey participants were chosen randomly.

**Follow-up results**

Eighty-nine percent (89%) found that the information presented at the workshop was useful.

Eighty-five percent (85%) found that they were more confident in dealing with the schools because of the information and support that they received from PACER Center.

Seventy percent (16 of 23 who answered this question) (70%) believe that they have been more involved in their child's educational program since attending PACER's workshop. Two (9%) felt that they had always been involved and four (17%) people felt that the schools were not responding. One person (4%) was not sure.

Seventy-two percent (72%) (18 of 25 who responded) believed their child had received more appropriate services from the school because they had put the workshop information to use. Seven parents (28%) either hadn't any problems with the schools, or were hoping "to get to that point."

Comments:

- "PACER makes me feel not so alone!"
- Parent knows that she can always call on PACER if there's anything she doesn't understand.
- Parent's first experience with school versa special needs and services. The parent was grateful that the knowledge about this was relayed at the workshop.

## Conclusion

There were 1,016 people who attended the 49 Level II workshops, both basic and specialized, during 2000-2001. This exceeded the grant goal of presenting 22 to 30 workshops to reach 675 to 875 people. The workshops reflected the need for ongoing information about basic rights and responsibilities as well as issues such as IDEA changes, Section 504, positive behavioral interventions, transition, graduation standards, and parent/professional communication skills.

Section 504 continued to be particularly relevant this year because of the increasing interest and need for regular education to meet the needs of more and more learners.

# Parent Training Project
## Level III – Training and Assistance to Underrepresented Parents

PACER has, over the years, served an increasing number of minority and culturally diverse parents and families through its various project activities, and with an array of specialized services.

Through PACER's Parent Training Project, American Indian Parent Network, and the EBD projects, PACER staff persons attended 656 conferences with parents at school, mental health, and social services or at PACER during 2000-2001. Of those, approximately 269 (41%) were with low-income parents and families and 244 (37%) of the meetings were with parents of color.

In addition, Project Youth's staff provided a workshop for 50 Southeast Asian parents, and the Minnesota Parent Center's staff provided assistance to 375 individuals through phone consultation, site visits and written materials about multicultural issues. The Minnesota Parent Center project conducted 13 workshops reaching 221 individuals from diverse cultural groups and unique and low-income groups.

The American Indian Parent Project presented 7 trainings and workshops for 69 people, ninety-five American Indian staff at 13 agencies that informed about the Project and the needs and strengths of Indian families. Nine presentations were national in scope reaching 637 people and 5 workshops for 45 people were held in Minnesota. The project provided individual assistance to 362 individuals. American Indian staff provided individual assistance through meetings, telephone and home visits on 29 occasions to minority families.

Specialized workshops and community activities are designed to enhance PACER's initiatives to meet the needs of minority and other special groups of parents, such as teen parents or homeless parents. Level III workshops are an additional way for minority or low-income parent involvement in Level II workshops and are not as a replacement. Many culturally diverse families do participate in traditional PACER workshops for all families. Level III workshops are offered as a means to extend information about educational services and special education rights and responsibilities to a larger number of parents.

Community inclusion efforts focus on informing professionals and parents within specific areas about special education and about seeking ways to reach more families. Materials have been translated in Hmong and Spanish. To meet the increasing requests for information and individual assistance, PACER has multicultural staff representing the African American, Hmong, Hispanic and Somalia communities.

These staff conducted workshops for families of children and youth with disabilities about special education laws and how it affects their children. They conduct home visits to discuss parents' concerns about school related issues that they have concerning their child(ren) with disabilities in a comfortable atmosphere. The multicultural staff attended, at the request of the families, the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meetings. They also provide expertise in the area of parental rights and responsibilities from the perspective of their culture.

The multicultural staff gives presentations to teachers and other professionals to assist them in better understanding the cultural differences of the students and their families. They do outreach to make their communities more aware of PACER and the services that are available to them.

### Federal Parent Training Grant Activities

Nineteen workshops under Level III reached 307 people in 2000-2001 related to issues affecting families of color and other culturally diverse families in educational planning. The federal Parent Training grant's goal

was to present six to eight workshops for 40 to 50 parents. During the year, the multicultural specialists provided workshops for 180 parents, 115 professionals and 12 students from the African-American, Hmong, American Indian and Hispanic groups to discuss family training needs and the unique aspects of including members of each cultural group in project activities.

| Date | Location | Topic | Parent | Profs. | Students | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/29/00 | White Bear Lake | Assessments & IEPs | 10 | 2 | 0 | 12 |
| 07/06/00 | St. Paul | Special Ed Process & Hmong Culture | 0 | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| 08/26/00 | Minneapolis | Basic Rights | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 08/31/00 | Crookston | Basic Rights | 50 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| 09/23/00 | Willmar | Basic Rights | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 10/13/00 | New Mexico | Working with Families of Diverse Culture | 0 | 30 | 0 | 30 |
| 10/19/00 | Minneapolis | Special Ed Process | 7 | 0 | 2 | 9 |
| 10/24/00 | St. Paul | Special Ed Process | 7 | 2 | 0 | 9 |
| 11/30/00 | White Bear Lake | PACER Services & the Special Ed Process | 8 | 2 | 0 | 10 |
| 12/14/00 | Minneapolis | Special Ed Process | 28 | 0 | 0 | 28 |
| 01/18/01 | White Bear Lake | PACER Services & the Special Ed Process | 6 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| 01/23/01 | St. Paul | How to access Special Ed Services | 7 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| 01/30/01 | St. Paul | Working with Immigrant Families | 0 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| 04/11/01 | St. Paul | Working with Hmong Families | 0 | 16 | 0 | 16 |
| 04/26/01 | Robbinsdale | FAS/FAE Health Fair | 30 | 14 | 10 | 54 |
| 04/28/01 | St. Paul | Basic Rights | 16 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| 05/02/01 | St. Paul | PACER Services | 0 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| 05/08/01 | St. Paul | PACER Services | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| 05/16/01 | Minneapolis | New Horizon Parents & Staff | 2 | 5 | 0 | 7 |
| Total | | | 180 | 115 | 12 | 307 |

**Workshops, services under other grants**

During 2000-2001, PACER staff also provided the following services to parents of diverse racial backgrounds. PACER

- Met 29 times in IEP meetings or home visits with American Indian parents regarding their specific concerns about transition and other issues.
- Presented 34 workshops, trainings and meetings for 435 minority family members, staff and professionals who work with them.
- Five workshops under the American Indian Parent Network project were presented to 45 people that included 37 American Indian parents and professionals and 2 trainings for 24 individuals at which 18 American Indian parents were trained as advocates for families of children with mental health issues.

## Conclusion

Specialized services to minority and low-income families are an important part of PACER's Parents Training Parents program. PACER makes a concerted culturally specific effort to meet the needs of families who might not otherwise attend workshops or seek information about their children's educational programs.

The specialized activities for minority parents during 2000-2001 resulted in PACER, through multiple projects, reaching more than 700 people in a variety of activities. PACER responded to more than 900 telephone

calls from culturally diverse parents and professionals who identified themselves as such; provided 57 presentations, workshops and meetings for 737 people, and participated in 333 home visits, IEP meetings, or other type of meeting (mental health, health, etc) where parents requested assistance.

Additionally, PACER staff serves on two national task forces for the development of services for Native American children. They are the National Native American Advisory Board and the National BIA Advisory Committee for Special Education, which examines the issues affecting culturally competent services for all minority children.

PACER far exceeded its goals of reaching 100 parents through individual assistance and to present 6 to 8 workshops for 40 to 50 parents. This year outreach has begun for the Somali population.

PACER will continue working with special populations to encourage increased participation so that they understand their rights and responsibilities in the special education process and to identify and train parents to serve as resources within their own communities.

# Parent Training Project
## Level IV – Local Capacity Building

Local Capacity Building activities are designed to improve and expand awareness by providing information and assistance to communities throughout Minnesota by training previously trained regional advocates on IDEA '97. On March 23 and 24, 2001, PACER presented an advanced two-day training for parent advocates reaching 20 people.

PACER hosted three advocacy group meetings to provide an opportunity for advocacy and disability organizations to share information regarding governmental affairs and policy activity. Staff from the Department of Children, Families, and Learning attended several of these meetings to communicate information to the organizations through out the state regarding proposed rule changes, special education funding, appeal process, and complaint process.

Level IV Local Capacity Building reached 109 people.

| Date | Location | Type | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 07/11/00 | Rochester | IDEA/97 Update | 8 |
| 07/19/00 | Richfield | IDEA/97 Update | 6 |
| 10/18/00* | Minneapolis | Advocacy Meeting | 25 |
| 02/01/01* | Minneapolis | Advocacy Meeting | 25 |
| 03/15/01* | Minneapolis | Advocacy Meeting | 25 |
| 3/23-24/01 | Minneapolis | Advocacy Training | 20 |
| Total | | | 109 |

*State Grant

**Training Evaluation**

The following is an evaluation completed by 12 out of the 20 participants (60%) at the advocacy training held on March 23-24, 2001.

1. On the whole, how would you rate this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 9 | 75% |
| Very Good | 3 | 25% |
| Good | 0 | 0% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

2. How would you rate the morning sessions?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 9 | 75% |
| Very Good | 3 | 25% |
| Good | 0 | 0% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

3. How would you rate the afternoon sessions?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 9 | 75% |
| Very Good | 3 | 25% |
| Good | 0 | 0% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

4. How would you rate the sessions on the second day?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 9 | 75% |
| Very Good | 3 | 25% |
| Good | 0 | 0% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

5. Have you learned anything new from this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 12 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

6. Has the training session made you more confident in your ability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 12 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

7. Are you a:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parent of a child with a disability | 11 | 92% |
| Organization or agency staff | 1 | 8% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

8. Do you feel the workshop packet will be useful to you?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very useful | 12 | 100% |
| Moderately useful | 0 | 0% |
| Not useful | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

## Follow-up Survey

Follow-up surveys were sent to the 20 newly trained persons in 2001 as well as 21 people who were recently trained. Twenty-five people (61%) responded with the activities that they completed during 2000-2001.

24 Provided advice and/or support to a parent of a child with a disability.
20 Spoke informally with educators regarding special education concerns.
14 Counseled a parent prior to a school conference.
13 Spoke informally to doctors, dentists, lawyers, and other professionals about special education concerns.
12 Communicated informally with policymakers regarding special education.
10 Joined a special education advisory group or committee.
9 Contacted elected officials or other policymakers about special education rules or laws.
9 Did volunteer work or joined the staff of disability/advocacy groups.
8 Joined a disability/advocacy group.

5 Helped plan meeting, workshop, in-service or conference.
5 Wrote letters or newsletter articles about special education issues.
5 Helped an inactive parent group become more active or helped strengthen an existing parent/consumer group or coalition.
5 Helped organize a parent/consumer group or special education advisory group.
4 Attended a conference/meeting regarding special education as a representative of a parent/consumer group at the local, regional, state or national level.
4 Spoke to a school, church, civic, university, and parent or consumer groups.
3 Spoke at school board meeting on behalf of special education concerns.
3 Accompanied a parent to a school conference.
2 Wrote letter-to-editor about special education concerns.
1 Provided testimony regarding special education issues at federal, state or local hearing, conference or meetings.
1 Helped PACER Center at a workshop.
157 Activities were provided.

Many of the respondents completed more than one activity. One parent commented, "PACER has helped me tremendously. Thank you!" Another said, "This training gave me more confidence and more desire to help others with how to better advocate for their child."

## Conclusion

In the 2000-01 year, twenty new advocates were trained as regional advocates. Previously trained advocates had the opportunity to attend two IDEA '97 Update workshops. Of 20 individuals trained this year and 21 others recently trained, 25 (61%) responded to the survey detailing the activities performed on behalf of children with disabilities, their families and professionals who work with them.

# Parent Training Project
## Level V: Public Information

A basic component of PACER's mission (to improve and expand opportunities that enhance the quality of life for the families of children and young adults with disabilities) is telling parents about PACER. Families cannot use PACER services unless they know about them. The news media is a primary vehicle for reaching those families.

Once connected to the families, PACER shares more focused information, assistance, and encouragement through its publications, workshops, and Web site. In 2000-2001, PACER produced a wide range of resources, including newsletters, brochures, handouts, press releases, overhead transparencies, and information for PACER's Web site, books, workshops, trainings, and national conferences.

**National publicity**

PACER's primary geographic focus is Minnesota, but PACER materials go beyond state lines. In addition, three PACER projects are national in scope with materials for a national perspective. Another three are partners in national collaborations. Following are examples of nationwide media coverage.

- Twenty-four publications with national focus and circulation carried information about PACER programs, mentioned PACER Center, or reprinted material produced by PACER, crediting PACER and giving information on how to contact PACER. Many do not have audited circulations. The largest circulations for those that do are *Newsday* (568,914) and *Computer User* (10 million).
- Requests to reprint from PACER materials for local or statewide purposes came from 32 different states (outside Minnesota) and one Canadian province, with the most out-of-state requests coming from California, North Dakota, Ohio, and Texas.
- Each of PACER's newsletters has out-of-state recipients. In addition to parents, professionals working with families of children and young adults with disabilities, and public officials, Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) across the nation are on PACER publication mailing lists.
- PACER staff spoke and made presentations in workshops and conferences across the United States, in addition to coordinating national meetings and trainings. PACER Center Executive Director Paula F. Goldberg has national visibility and respect and is considered a national expert on advocacy for children and young adults with disabilities, as are several other staff members.
- As the coordinating office for three national programs, PACER is the site for publishing materials disseminated under FAPE, Alliance, and TATRA. In recognition of the 25th anniversary of the IDEA, news releases were mailed to 255 newspapers around the nation as part of the FAPE project.
- PACER's Web site had approximately 3.5 million hits and 237,491 visitors for the year. It averages nearly 288,900 hits and 19,791 visitors per month from Internet users across the world, but primarily from the United States. (Hits include accessing files, images, etc. Visitors are those actually registering and using the site.) In addition to the more than 600 documents on PACER's Web site, there are articles on the Alliance and FAPE Web sites, which are linked to the PACER Web site. The Alliance Web site totaled 345,177 hits and 92,169 visitors for the year, and the FAPE Web site had 607,459 hits and 112,697 visitors. Among the three sites there was a total of approximately 4.45 million hits.

- The 2001 PACER Benefit sold-out performance of Welsh vocalist Charlotte Church that followed previous Benefit appearances by Harry Belafonte, Gladys Knight, Natalie Cole and Bill Cosby and confirmed PACER's place in a national entertainment arena.
- PACER Center's media list of 1,052 includes 218 publications or broadcast outlets with addresses outside Minnesota. Approximately 130 of them have national focus.

**State and local publicity**

Minnesota has approximately 111,000 children with disabilities, and PACER's major focus is on helping them and their families. Following are examples of PACER's public information efforts in Minnesota during this past year.

- In Minnesota, there were 417 publication hits with a potential of total 47.4 million reader hits. The number includes the combined circulation of the newspapers carrying articles on or mentioning PACER Center. Circulation for some of the publications is not available. Several publications, such as the Star Tribune, covered PACER more than once. Print media mentioned PACER's workshops, projects, publications, staff, board members, or annual the Benefit, as well as using PACER staff as expert sources in feature or news articles.
- There were 71 documented radio or television spots (all in the metropolitan area) that featured PACER with the potential of 101.9 million listener hits. The documented pieces included interviews that mentioned PACER Center services or publicized PACER events. In addition, there is the potential for hundreds of additional PSAs having been aired about PACER workshops or other events in the metro area and across Minnesota. It is difficult to document PSAs unless someone who hears them records the data. Stations rarely share their logs (the count above includes Benefit PSAs from KMSP-TV's log). There are 168 radio stations on PACER's media list.
- PACER staff were contacted by the media and quoted as experts in 38 broadcast and print features or news articles.
- PACER conducted workshops, conferences, public meetings, or trainings in the fiscal year. A total of 100 flyers publicized the events. In addition, news releases publicizing more than 500 workshops, trainings and presentations were sent to appropriate local media
- Sue Abderholden attended the Minnesota Legislature as a resource on special education and other issues affecting families of children and young adults with disabilities. She also participated in the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities. Her activities increased PACER's visibility among legislators and the public and confirmed her stature in the field of disabilities.
- PACER's nine newsletters have combined circulation of over 121,800. Most target Minnesota with some circulation in other states. *Point of Departure* and the *Alliance Newsletter* have a national focus. Individual circulations according to mail lists are (as of fiscal year end, May 31, 2001):

  *PACESETTER* –83,380
  *Computer Monitor* – 7,998
  *Point of Departure* –2,884
  *Early Childhood Connection* – 8,395
  *Family Involvement (MPC)* – 4,000 (distributed)
  *Family Voices* – 350 (distributed)
  *Looking Ahead* – 4,000 (print order)
  *PACER Partners* – 8,540
  *The Parent Centers Alliance* – 1,477 (National in scope)

**Available publications**

Several new books or booklets and revisions of others were accomplished in the past fiscal year. PACER's publications catalog includes 200 listings of PACER-generated materials.

**Reprints**

PACER receives many requests each year to reprint its handouts, newsletter articles, and excerpts from publications. In 2000-01, PACER processed 83 requests to reprint materials. Some of most frequent requests to reprints were for "Person First," a long-time favorite handout that was revised and printed in the Fall 2000 *PACESETTER*, and "What is a Functional Assessment" a handout (also available on PACER's Web site), and "Does My Child Have a Emotional Behavioral Disorder," a handout. Other reprint requests were for other handouts or newsletters articles, primarily from the *PACESETTER*.

**PACER's Benefit events**

In the fifth year of the Benefit Kickoff (PACER Taster - March), media contacts were made through news releases, personal letters, phone calls, and faxes. Media and sports personalities participated in the event as celebrity waiters. Four of the Twin Cities' major television stations broadcast segments from the event, and *Star Tribune* columnist C.J. covered it. There were six broadcast promotional pieces—five on television and one on radio.

PACER's 19th Annual Benefit (May 5) again drew exceptional media attention. Local media personalities helped with publicity before the event. The evening was a sell-out with 3,000 people attending Charlotte Church's performance and the auctions preceding it and 300 volunteers helping the day of the Benefit.

The first news release announcing the Benefit was sent to 167 media outlets in mid January. It was followed up with phone calls and additional information where appropriate and where there are established contacts. A second release with biography and Benefit fact sheet was mailed to the same outlets in mid April.

Ads were designed for pro bono advertising. *Mpls St. Paul Magazine*, *Minnesota Monthly*, and *Law and Politics* donated ad space. Advertising was placed in the *Star Tribune* and Wixon Jewelers who sponsored 2"x5" ads in four issues of the *Star Tribune*.

In addition, there were 56 mentions of the Benefit in print media. There was a potential of 14.8 million hits through publications. Post-event photos will appear in *Mpls St. Paul* and *Minnesota Monthly* magazines (after the fiscal year ends).

The *Star Tribune's* "FreeTime" entertainment carried a cover story with center spread, based on an interview with Ms. Church.

KARE 11 was the Benefit television sponsor with advance public service announcements beginning in March. In addition, the Benefit and the kickoff were featured three times in KARE magazine format shows. Paul Magers of KARE was Benefit emcee and narrated PACER's video. Other broadcast exposure: KMSP-TV carried 25 Benefit PSAs between April 1 and 30; WCCO-radio featured the Benefit in four programs, plus multiple mentions by personalities; WMNN radio gave numerous mentions, primarily through Denny and Marie Green.

The Benefit was covered through 41 documented broadcast opportunities, with a potential for reaching 59.9 million broadcast hits. Interviews with Charlotte Church were done by KDWB-radio and WCCO-radio.

A short video provided an overview of PACER Center to persons attending the Benefit. It can be used throughout the year.

## Conclusion

PACER's federal Parent Training grant named the following public information and dissemination activity goals for the 2000-01 fiscal year:

1. To provide information concerning children with disabilities, PACER services, IDEA and best practices will be disseminated statewide to parents, professionals and others using various formats. According to the circulations of publishers and broadcast stations that carried material about PACER and its work with the IDEA-special education the numbers were obtained:

- Through print, there was the potential for reaching 47.5 million people.
- Through broadcast, the potential was 59.9 million
- Through the three Web sites, the potential was a total 4.5 million hits.

2. To reach 200 members of the community through presentations to community groups and at conferences. The Parent Training Project made 8 presentations to 1,045 individuals.

| Date | Location | Topic | Parents | Prof. | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 07/12/00 | Breezy Point, MN | Community Resources | 0 | 20 | 0 | 20 |
| 07/12/00 | Breezy Point, MN | Community Resources | 0 | 25 | 0 | 25 |
| 02/26/01 | St. Paul | Special Education | 80 | 20 | 0 | 100 |
| 03/07/01 | Minneapolis | Tour | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 04/17/01 | New Brighton | PACER Services | 0 | 30 | 0 | 30 |
| 04/24/01 | New Brighton | PACER Services | 0 | 5 | 19 | 24 |
| 04/27/01 | St. Paul | ADHD – Parent Resources | 0 | 45 | 0 | 45 |
| 11/28/00 | Bloomington | PACER Open House | 690 | 50 | 60 | 800 |
| Total | | | 770 | 195 | 80 | 1045 |

PACER through its other projects provided 151 presentations to community groups and at conferences reaching 3,445.

| PACER Project | Number | Attending |
|---|---|---|
| American Indian Project | 13 | 95 |
| Computer Resource Center | 52 | 824 |
| COUNT ME IN | 4 | 165 |
| EBD Project | 10 | 209 |
| Health Information & Advocacy | 6 | 415 |
| Juvenile Justice Project | 6 | 207 |
| Minnesota Parent Center | 28 | 561 |
| Project KITE | 7 | 196 |
| Project PRIDE | 9 | 408 |
| Project Youth | 8 | 263 |
| State Improvement Grant | 8 | 102 |
| Total | 151 | 3445 |

3. To reach over 67,000 people through the *PACESETTER* newsletter.

The *PACESETTER* was mailed three times during this past year reaching over 80,000 people at each mailing.

Through its various media outlets, PACER has informed potential millions of people about children with disabilities, services that PACER offers, and other issues that are of interest to families and professionals.

# Parent Training Project
## Level VI – Parent and Professional Collaboration

PACER conducted 11 in-services and presentations during 2000-01 for 317 people (262 educators, county social workers and other professionals, 43 parents and 12 students). The number exceeded PACER's original goal of 4 to 6 in-service and pre-service sessions for 100 to 200 professionals on the parent perspective.

Topics of the in-services and presentations included the parent's perspective, how to communicate with parents and families, developing cultural competence and increasing awareness and understanding of disabilities.

PACER served on 19 task forces and policy committees that met 60 times. Through these parent and professional collaborations, PACER was able to share the parent perspective.

PACER's executive director and associate directors also met with state legislators (when invited) and other policymakers and state agency staff and presented information on early childhood, special education and vocational concerns.

### Parent/professional in-services

| Date | Location | Topic | Parent | Prof. | Students | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/20/00 | St. Paul | IEP & Section 504 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| 07/14/00 | Windom | Parents as Partners | 0 | 21 | 0 | 21 |
| 08/28/00 | Rush City | Parent School Communication | 0 | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| 08/29/00 | Comfrey | Parents' Perspective of IEP | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| 10/05/00 | Richfield | An Open Discussion with Judy Heumann | 31 | 42 | 0 | 73 |
| 01/16/01 | Redwood Falls | SE Process/IDEA '97 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| 02/26/01 | Brooklyn Park | How Parents Can Know if Child is Making Progress | 1 | 22 | 0 | 23 |
| 03/08/01 | Anoka | PACER & Transition Services | 1 | 19 | 0 | 20 |
| 05/03/01 | Farmington | Minnesota Community Educators | 0 | 18 | 0 | 18 |
| 05/08/01 | Minneapolis | PACER & Transition Services | 10 | 2 | 12 | 24 |
| 05/15/01 | Minnetonka | PACER & Transition Services | 0 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| Total | | | 43 | 262 | 12 | 317 |

### Meetings and Task Forces

| Date | Location | Meetings/Task Forces |
|---|---|---|
| 06/12/00 | St. Paul | D/HH Education |
| 06/13/00 | Anoka | Self Study Group |
| 06/21/00 | Minneapolis | Self Assessment Committee |
| 06/26-27/00 | St. Paul | State SEAC Advisory Council |
| 07/17-19/00 | Chicago, Ill | Minnesota Monitoring Committee |
| 08/02-03/00 | St. Paul | State SEAC Advisory Council |
| 08/02-03/00 | Plymouth | SEAC |
| 08/02/00 | Roseville | Administrative Licensure |
| 08/08/00 | Anoka | Self Study Group |
| 09/12/00 | Anoka | Self Study Group |
| 09/20/00 | Roseville | Administrative Licensure |
| 09/20-21/00 | St. Paul | State SEAC Advisory Council |
| 09/20-21/00 | Plymouth | SEAC |
| 09/25-26/00 | Minneapolis | Self Assessment Committee |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10/10/00 | Anoka | Self Study Group |
| 10/23/00 | Golden Valley | Public Policy Adv. Committee |
| 10/24/00 | Roseville | Interagency Meeting |
| 10/25-26/00 | Roseville | Minnesota Monitoring Committee |
| 10/25-26/00 | Minneapolis | Self Assessment Committee |
| 10/25-26/00 | Plymouth | OAEP Monitoring Report |
| 11/06-07/00 | Roseville | Minnesota Monitoring committee |
| 11/06-07/00 | Minneapolis | Self Assessment Committee |
| 11/06-07/00 | Plymouth | OAEP Monitoring Report |
| 11/09/00 | Roseville | Administrative Licensure |
| 11/14/00 | Anoka | Self Study Group |
| 11/16/00 | Minneapolis | SEAGEA |
| 11/20-21/00 | Roseville | Minnesota Monitoring Committee |
| 11/20-21/00 | Plymouth | OAEP Monitoring Report |
| 12/08/00 | Roseville | Administrative Licensure |
| 12/12/00 | Roseville | Minnesota Monitoring Committee |
| 12/12/00 | Minneapolis | Self Assessment Committee |
| 12/12/00 | Plymouth | OAEP Monitoring Report |
| 01/09/01 | Anoka | Self Study Group |
| 01/12/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 01/16/01 | Minneapolis | SEAGEA |
| 01/17/01 | Roseville | K – 12 Work Group |
| 01/19/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 01/22/01 | Roseville | 1st CFL Rules Hearing |
| 01/22/01 | Golden Valley | Public Policy Adv. Committee |
| 02/02/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 02/09/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 02/13/01 | Anoka | Self Study Group |
| 02/13-14/01 | St. Paul | State SEAC Advisory Council |
| 02/13-14/01 | Plymouth | SEAC |
| 02/16/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 02/20/01 | Roseville | Minnesota Association of Charter Schools |
| 02/23/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 02/27-28/01 | Plymouth | SEAC |
| 03/02/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 03/09/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 03/16/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 03/23/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 03/27-28/01 | St. Paul | State SEAC Advisory Council |
| 03/30/01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 04/12/01 | Minneapolis | Over Representation |
| 04/20.01 | Roseville | Task Force on Special Education Criteria |
| 04/23/01 | Roseville | Rules Hearing |
| 04/24/01 | St. Paul | Minnesota Association of Charter Schools |
| 05/22/01 | Minneapolis | CFL Mediation Group |
| 05/30/01 | Brainerd | Directors Forum |

## Conclusion

PACER's goal was to present four to six in-service and pre-service sessions for 100 to 200 professionals to share the parent perspective. PACER presented 11 parent/professional in-service sessions and presentations for 317 individuals. PACER participated on 19 task forces and policymaking boards that met 60 times to foster more effective communication, networking, and statewide planning.

# Early Childhood Parent Training

Minnesota mandates special education services for children with disabilities beginning at birth. Federal and state law mandates meaningful family involvement in planning, developing and implementing comprehensive services for young children with disabilities. PACER, with a grant from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, provides training, information and support to families who have children with disabilities from birth through 5 years. PACER was awarded another grant to continue a project to train parents of children with disabilities age birth through five.

To ensure involvement in the process, families need to become knowledgeable about early intervention service systems and their rights under the law, and to acquire better communication skills for team planning and advocating for their child. As a result, parents will gain the confidence needed to help their child. The impact of intervention on children with disabilities is directly proportional to the nature of parents' participation.

PACER workshops have been developed to train parents to effectively advocate for their children in the early intervention system. As parents acquire knowledge about the law and available resources, their abilities to effectively advocate for their children and collaborate with professionals improve.

Each workshop is approximately 3 hours long and includes both oral and visual information, interactive activities, a question and answer period and networking and sharing opportunities. The core workshop content includes:

- A brief history of early intervention services
- Current interagency, early intervention services available in Minnesota, including the early intervention process of screening, referral, assessment, intervention and evaluation
- Differences between the IFSP and IEP
- Introduction to the IIIP – super IEP for children who are receiving special education services from school and one or more of the public agency
- Parental rights and responsibilities
- Information about 3rd party billing
- Communicating with professionals
- Strategies to ensure the child receives appropriate services

Workshops also include information about specific topics identified, like transition, behavior and inclusion. Parents are given a packet of materials including handouts on a variety of subjects including Minnesota's model for interagency early intervention collaboration. The packet also includes information to support parents as they prepare to attend a planning meeting, work with the team to write an IFSP or IEP or respond to a proposed action. A resource list of Disability Organizations is also in the packet.

After a workshop is completed each participant is asked to complete an evaluation form specific to the Early Childhood Project. PACER asks attendees to offer comments regarding the value of the workshop contents and suggestions for future workshops. PACER's early childhood staff and Executive Director review each evaluation form and make efforts to incorporate participant comments into planning for future workshops. Modifications in style and content were made as appropriate.

During 2000-01, PACER agreed to present 3 to 4 workshops in greater Minnesota and 3 to 4 workshops in the metropolitan area. PACER presented 16 workshops emphasizing a parent's rights and responsibilities, the interagency planning process, sharing information and communicating with professionals. These workshops included an introduction to 3rd party billing and the IIIP. The IIIP is for children who are receiving special education services from school and one or more public agency. Six workshops were held in greater Minnesota reaching 86 people and ten in the metropolitan area reaching 128 people for a total of 214 people.

**Workshops in greater Minnesota:**

| Date | City | Parents | Prof. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10/13/00 | Crookston, MN | 10 | 3 | 13 |
| 03/26/01 | Grand Rapids, MN | 5 | 9 | 14 |
| 03/31/01 | Alexandria, MN | 18 | 0 | 18 |
| 04/01/01 | Alexandria, MN | 25 | 5 | 30 |
| 04/02/01 | Willmar, MN | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| 04/09/01 | Winona, MN | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Total | | 66 | 20 | 86 |

**Workshops in the metropolitan area:**

| Date | City | Parents | Prof. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/13/00 | St. Paul | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| 06/20/00 | St. Paul | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 06/22/00 | Minnetonka | 0 | 11 | 11 |
| 08/30/00 | Roseville | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| 10/02/00 | Stillwater | 0 | 30 | 30 |
| 11/14/00 | Inver Grove Heights | 16 | 4 | 20 |
| 11/20/00 | Minneapolis | 1 | 30 | 31 |
| 03/29/01 | Chaska | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| 04/12/01 | Bloomington | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| 04/26/01 | St. Paul | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Total | | 28 | 100 | 128 |

**Specialized Workshops:**

| Date | City | Topic | Parents | Prof. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 04/28/01 | Bloomington, MN | Technology in EC* | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| 05/07/01 | Bloomington, MN | Transition planning in EC | 10 | 6 | 16 |
| 05/17/01 | Minneapolis, MN | EC behavior issues | 20 | 7 | 27 |
| Total | | | 34 | 16 | 50 |

*Also listed under Computer Resource Center

Evaluations from workshop participants have been very positive. At each workshop, participants are asked to fill out evaluation. Evaluations were completed by 75 (28%) of the 264 people who attended the all of the workshops.

1. Who are you?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parent/relative of a child with a disability | 50 | 61% |
| Staff/agency | 10 | 12% |
| Regular educator/administrator | 10 | 12% |
| Special educator/administrator | 2 | 3% |
| Foster parent | 5 | 6% |
| Other | 5 | 6% |
| Total* | 82 | 100% |

* More than one answer may have been given.

2. On the whole, how would you rate this workshop or presentation?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 43 | 59% |
| Very Good | 27 | 37% |
| Good | 3 | 4% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 73 | 100% |

3. How old is your child(ren) with a disability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Birth to 3 | 36 | 72% |
| 4 to 5 | 8 | 16% |
| 6 to 11 | 5 | 10% |
| 12 to 14 | 0 | 0% |
| 15 to 18 | 0 | 0% |
| 19 to 22 | 1 | 2% |
| Older | 0 | 0% |
| Total* | 50 | 100% |

* More than one answer may have been given.

4. What is your child(ren)'s area of delay?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Autism | 9 | 15% |
| Multiple disabilities | 7 | 11% |
| Neurological impairment | 6 | 10% |
| Speech/language | 5 | 8% |
| Mental retardation | 5 | 8% |
| ADHD | 2 | 3% |
| EBD(ADHD) | 2 | 3% |
| Visual Impairment/blind | 2 | 3% |
| TBI | 2 | 3% |
| Learning disability | 2 | 3% |
| EBD | 1 | 2% |
| Health Impairment | 1 | 2% |
| Orthopedic impairment | 1 | 2% |
| Other | 17 | 27% |
| Total* | 62 | 100% |

* More than one answer may have been given

5. Has this workshop helped?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 39 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 39 | 100% |

6. Have you learned anything new from attending this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 59 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 59 | 100% |

7. If you were interested in attending another workshop, what topics would be of interest to you?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Assistive technology | 29 | 13% |
| Early childhood | 26 | 11% |
| Communication | 23 | 10% |
| EBD | 18 | 8% |
| Inclusion | 18 | 8% |
| Disability information | 17 | 7% |
| IEP | 15 | 7% |
| Siblings | 13 | 6% |
| ADHD | 13 | 6% |
| SSI | 12 | 5% |
| Transition | 10 | 4% |
| Services for adults | 5 | 2% |
| School reform | 5 | 2% |
| Speech/language | 4 | 2% |
| Section 504 | 3 | 1% |
| Supported employment | 3 | 1% |
| Other | 15 | 7% |
| Total* | 229 | 100% |

*More than one answer may have been given.

7. What information did you find most interesting/helpful?

- Better understanding of the IFSP process
- How to help parents' access help.
- All of the information was helpful and well organized.
- Entire process.
- How important the IEP are.
- What PACER has to offer.
- Being around other parents who have children with disabilities.
- Other people going through the same thing.

8. Other Comments about Training

- It was nice to be in a small group setting.
- Very informative, thank you!
- Very informative – opened my eyes to the problems families face.
- Thank you for providing day care; it made it possible to attend the workshop.

**Autism workshop**

PACER staff has begun planning an all-day workshop to discuss the implications of Autism Spectrum Disorders in educational planning. During the past year, over 20% of the intakes for PACER's Early Childhood Project were related to children with a disability on the autism spectrum.

**Collaboration**

PACER collaborated with many groups in the state to foster communication among parents, agencies and participants involved in early childhood. PACER's early childhood staff coordinated workshops in conjunction with various community groups including child care providers, local IEICs, Head Start staff, Project Exceptional trainers and ECSE / ECFE staff. Additionally, parents and other groups such as public health agencies, ECFE representatives, parents from PACER's boards and other parents were involved in planning and monitoring

activities. PACER early childhood staff worked with parents from underrepresented populations in several communities, as well.

### *Early Childhood Connection* – Newsletter

Through its issues of the *Early Childhood Connection*, PACER informed parents about current issues and topics in early childhood, system changes, parent rights and responsibilities and different services that may be available to children with disabilities and their families. PACER uses the *Early Childhood Connection* to facilitate and support effective advocacy by parents. Each issue of the *ECC* was eight pages in length and is carefully written to ensure readability for parents with low reading skills. The Early Childhood Connection newsletter was mailed two times to almost 8,400 people each time that are on its mail list during 2000-01.

PACER does not have automatic access to the names of newly identified infants and young children who have a disability. To receive the *ECC*, parents must contact PACER directly.

In addition, PACER has received numerous requests for multiple copies of the newsletter for local distribution from school districts, central intake coordinators and service coordinators. PACER distributes smaller quantities to daycare centers, ECFE programs and training programs. PACER receives many comments on the value and high quality of the newsletter.

### Individual Assistance

PACER's Early Childhood Project responded to more than 750 requests for information and assistance during the grant cycle. This number reflects phone calls from families of children, ages birth – five, as well as professionals who work with these families. After providing phone support to parents and professionals, PACER early childhood staff distributed brochures and other resource information as appropriate. Parents from greater Minnesota utilized PACER's toll-free number. PACER early childhood staff attended IFSP, IEP meetings and mediations at parents' request when necessary.

PACER selected 7 families at random to ask about the effectiveness of the early childhood program. All of these families had phoned PACER requesting individual assistance.

1. How helpful was the information you received?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very helpful | 5 | 72% |
| Somewhat helpful | 1 | 14% |
| Slightly helpful | 1 | 14% |
| Not helpful | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 7 | 100% |

2. Did you feel more confident in your ability to work with early intervention service system after speaking to PACER Center?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 6 | 86% |
| No | 1 | 14% |
| Total | 7 | 100% |

3. Has the information you received enabled you to obtain at least some of the services you feel your child needs?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 5 | 71% |
| No | 2 | 29% |
| Total | 7 | 100% |

4. Do you feel you could have received the assistance you needed if PACER Center's services had not been available?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 2 | 29% |
| No | 5 | 71% |
| Total | 7 | 100% |

Comments:

- "I had some knowledge but I needed the advocate to direct me."
- "I might have found someone to help but I would have had to look very hard."
- "I would have found a way, but PACER made it easier"

5 How old is your child(ren) with a disability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Birth to 2 | 0 | 0% |
| 3 to 4 | 4 | 57% |
| 5 and older | 3 | 43% |
| Total | 7 | 100% |

6. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

- "There are great services at PACER."
- "It has been wonderful working with PACER and the advocate."
- "I'm happy with the help I have received."
- "I felt more empowered and stronger with the advocate at my side."

As part of the ongoing distribution of information to parents, PACER updated and provided parents with brochures and materials on a variety of topics. These materials include a brochure on *"PARENTS HELPING PARENTS"* and two resource books developed by PACER Center, *Families are Important* and *Choices. Families are Important* was revised to reflect the changes in federal law and reprinted during this grant cycle. PACER also distributes many informational handouts to assist parents in advocating for their children and communicating with professionals.

PACER staff distributed information about the early childhood training project to local area hospitals, clinics and county agencies, as well as to local ECFE programs. Additionally, PACER mailed information and workshop flyers to local community and county agencies.

The Early Childhood project has developed a process to distribute information to families of young children through utilizing a comprehensive database system. Once a person contacts PACER Center, he or she is added to the database. PACER staff distribute written information to each caller as needed and then ensure they are placed on all appropriate mailing lists for newsletters as well as future workshops.

The Early Childhood Project has a separate icon on the PACER Center Web site. PACER Center's Web site provides linkages to both local and national agencies and organizations that offer assistance to families of young children who have disabilities.

## Conclusion

PACER continues to receive daily requests for information on early intervention services for young children with disabilities and their families. We are receiving calls from parents who have children with disabilities who are only a few days or weeks old. PACER also receives requests for materials about the project from around the country.

PACER continues to reach out to parents and professionals to keep them informed about early intervention services and PACER's Early Childhood Project. Calls and contacts have been made to disability organizations, ECSE and ECFE programs, health and human service providers, childcare providers, NICU'S, physicians and health care providers.

PACER's early childhood workshops address the informational needs of parents of infants, toddlers and preschoolers with disabilities. It is clear from the evaluations completed by the participants at the workshops that there is concern on the part of parents about the complexities of planning for their child. They expressed a strong desire for information that will help them successfully negotiate the educational, social service and community systems to ensure the needs of their child and family are met. PACER anticipates that parents of young children with disabilities will continue to need information and training regarding their rights to and responsibilities in obtaining appropriate services. Parents will also continue to training in methods to effectively utilize their information and skills to communicate with professionals.

Contacts were made with many early childhood teachers and coordinators to discuss PACER's Early Childhood Project and to ask their assistance in reaching parents and professionals within their region. Several contacts have sent PACER lists of names to be included on the early childhood mailing list. PACER will also continue to develop additional contacts in order to reach parents and professionals.

As PACER works with families of young children with disabilities through this project, staff recognizes the enormous need for providing information on early intervention to families. Parents have a vital need to obtain information and support as they strive to ensure their children receive appropriate services from the early intervention system.

# Project for Families of Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

PACER Center has provided support services for parents of children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) since 1984. This project began with the publication of the *A Guidebook for Parents of Children with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders* and workshops designed to help families access the educational and mental health programs their children needed in order to be successful, and in it's first year reached over 280 families.

Seventeen years later, the EBD Project this year alone has reached over 3,000 parents and professionals through individual assistance, specialized workshops, support group presentations and advocacy trainings. These services are designed to help families' access the educational and mental health programs their children need in order to be successful, and were funded through a variety of funding sources. The Center for Mental Health Services in the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Minnesota Department of Human Services Children's Mental Health Division, and the Federal Department of Education contribute funding to the specific services of this project to meet the needs of families statewide.

From June 1, 2000, through May 31, 2001, PACER's EBD Project accomplished the following tasks related to serving families of children with emotional and behavioral disorders:

- Responded to more than 1,700 telephone requests for assistance from throughout the state and the nation. For families from diverse cultural backgrounds, individual assistance calls were more often the method of assistance, with most of the calls coming from family members who identify themselves as minority members.
- The mailing list of parents and professionals concerned with emotional and behavioral disorders is more than 19,500.
- Attended 114 individual assistance meetings with parents and family members at schools and juvenile correctional facilities, 89 (78%) with persons of color and 91 (80%) who were considered low income.
- Presented 27 workshops, 20 in Minnesota and 7 nationally, to 2,735 individuals on rights and responsibilities in education, mental health and other systems serving the needs of children with EBD
- Organized and conducted 3, two-day leadership trainings for 45 parents. One of the trainings was specifically for Native American parents and was done in conjunction with the American Indian Project.
- Presented information on parent and professional collaboration and parent perspectives to 209 persons at 10 state conferences and in-services.
- Worked with the Children's Mental Health (CMH) staff at the Department of Human Services to plan the Annual Children's Mental Health Conference and the Minnesota Parent Leadership Summit, both of which were held in the Fall 2000. Also met with CMH staff throughout the year to discuss the status of children's mental health services in Minnesota and to continue the focus on family-driven services. Provided Children's Mental Health Case Managers in St. Cloud management training in the form of two workshops to 49 professionals.
- Served on the Separate Sites Leadership Group to identify criteria for serving youth with SED and EBD in separate sites such as day treatments, correctional settings, etc.
- Served on the Subcommittee for Children's Mental Health, chairing the respite work group.
- Rewrote and published 3,000 copies of *A Guidebook for Parents of Children with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders*.
- Sent to parents and professionals various articles and handouts on Positive Behavioral Interventions, Functional Behavior Assessments, and others of interest to mental health support.
- Distributed information about emotional and behavioral disorders and project services at state and national conferences to more than 3,000 persons.

- Almost 12,000 persons visited the EBD Project page of the PACER Web site.

## Workshops for Family Members and Parents

Twenty workshops were presented for parents and families of children with EBD during the past year in Minnesota for 432 individuals, including 21% persons of color. Nationally another 7 workshops for 1,805 people were given and counted under the national FAPE Project. All of the workshops focused on parents' rights, school discipline and special education law, positive behavior interventions, functional behavior assessments, ADHD, children's mental health services, and parent/professional collaboration. Workshops marked with a # sign were specifically directed to reaching diverse families.

**Minnesota EBD Workshops**

| Date | Location | Topic | Parents | Prof | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 08/08/00 | Fridley | ADHD Support Group | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| 08/21/00 | Rochester | Basic Rights | 30 | 6 | 36 |
| 08/22/00 | Rochester | Moving Beyond Punishment | 40 | 0 | 40 |
| 08/29/00# | Red Lake | Special Education Rights & Positive Behavior Intervention | 15 | 6 | 21 |
| 09/19/00 | St. Louis Park | Moving Beyond Punishment | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 09/23/00 | Willmar* | Positive Behavior Intervention | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| 09/25/00 | Wadena | Positive Behavior Intervention | 20 | 4 | 24 |
| 09/26/00 | Little Falls | Moving Beyond Punishment | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 10/10/00 | Princeton* | Positive Behavior Intervention and Juvenile Justice | 23 | 27 | 50 |
| 10/12/00 | Jordan | Special Ed Law & Discipline | 14 | 1 | 15 |
| 10/17/00 | Moorhead* | Moving Beyond Punishment | 11 | 7 | 18 |
| 10/26/00 | Bloomington | CMH Conference/IDEA 97 and How It Impacts Kids w/ EBD | 13 | 2 | 15 |
| 11/14/00 | St. Paul* | Moving Beyond Punishment | 18 | 13 | 31 |
| 02/13/01 | Anoka* | Moving Beyond Punishment | 7 | 12 | 19 |
| 02/27/01 | Rosemount* | Moving Beyond Punishment | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| 03/06/01 | Alexandria | Moving Beyond Punishment | 11 | 13 | 24 |
| 03/13/01 | Mankato* | Special Ed Law, School Discipline & Positive Behavior Intervention | 27 | 19 | 46 |
| 03/21/01 | Minneapolis | Moving Beyond Punishment | 24 | 7 | 31 |
| 03/27/01 | St. Cloud* | Moving Beyond Punishment | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| 04/19/01# | Mahnomen* | Positive Behavioral Intervention | 11 | 8 | 19 |
| Total | | | 300 | 132 | 432 |

#=Multicultural workshops

The following are the results of evaluations from 9 workshops (marked with * above) with 213 people attending. Not all of the attendees answered all of the questions.

1. Are you a:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parent/relative of a child with disabilities | 98 | 46% |
| Staff member of another agency | 41 | 19% |
| Individual with a disability | 22 | 10% |
| Foster parent | 15 | 7% |
| Special educator or administrator | 12 | 5% |
| Other | 27 | 13% |
| Total* | 215 | 100% |

*More than one answer may have been given

2. How old is your child?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Birth to 3 | 3 | 3% |
| 4 to 5 | 5 | 4% |
| 6 to 11 | 37 | 32% |
| 12 to 14 | 27 | 23% |
| 15 to 18 | 29 | 25% |
| 19 to 22 | 4 | 3% |
| Older | 11 | 10% |
| Total | 116 | 100% |

3. Have you learned anything new from this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 102 | 88% |
| No | 14 | 12% |
| Total | 116 | 100% |

4. Has this workshop helped?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 79 | 96% |
| No | 3 | 4% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

5. On the whole, how would you rate this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 77 | 44% |
| Very good | 75 | 42% |
| Good | 24 | 13% |
| Fair | 1 | 1% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 177 | 100% |

**National EBD Workshops**

| Date | Location | Topic | Parents |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06/01/00 | Washington DC | IDEA Partnerships/School Climate & Discipline Panel | 45 |
| 06/02/00 | Washington DC | IDEA Partnerships/School Climate & Discipline Panel | 35 |
| 06/28/00 | Milwaukee, WI | Spina Bifida Association IDEA | 30 |
| 06/28/00 | Milwaukee, WI | Spina Bifida Association IDEA | 60 |
| 07/21/00 | Biloxi, MS | Arc of Mississippi/Juvenile Justice & Youth with Disabilities | 75 |
| *11/29/00 | Washington DC | FFCMH Conference | 60 |
| *12/02/00 | Washington DC | FFCMH Conference/Keynote Address | 1,500 |
| Total | | | 1,805 |

*=Funded & counted also in the FAPE National Project

## Advocacy Training

The EBD Project is to provide three 2-day intensive trainings for 20 to 30 parent leaders including one specifically for American Indian parents on leadership and management skills based on the unique funding, services and political structures specific to reservations.

The three leadership trainings were held for parents of children with EBD who had agreed to serve in leadership roles in their communities regarding children's mental health services. Forty-five parents participated. Of those participants, 13 were parents of color. One of the trainings took place on the White Earth Reservation

where 9 participants were Native Americans. Two Native American parents attended the Minneapolis training. Two Hispanic parents attended the Willmar training.

All the participants rated the trainings as very good or excellent and felt that the training made them more competent to advocate not only for their own child, but also for the children in their communities. Many of these parents participated in the Parent Leadership Summit that the Department of Human Services, Children's Mental Health, and PACER facilitated this past fall, and have taken active roles as support group leaders and parent liaisons in their areas.

| Date | Location | Parent/Advocates |
|---|---|---|
| 03/02-03/01 | Willmar, MN | 18 |
| 03/23-24/01 | Minneapolis, MN | 15 |
| 04/20-21/01* | Mahnomen, MN | 12 |
| Total | | 45 |

*This training is also listed in the American Indian Parent Project

**Telephone Follow Up Survey**

Of the parents who had received telephone or workshop assistance through the year, 17 parents were randomly selected for follow-up surveys and not all questions were answered.

1. How helpful was the information or assistance you received on the telephone?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very Helpful | 14 | 88% |
| Moderately helpful | 1 | 6% |
| Slightly Helpful | 1 | 6% |
| Not helpful at all | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 16 | 100% |

2. Do you feel more confident in your ability to work with the schools after speaking to or receiving assistance from PACER Center?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 14 | 82% |
| No | 2 | 12% |
| Sometimes | 1 | 6% |
| Total | 17 | 100% |

3. Has the information and/or assistance you received enabled you to obtain at least some of the services you feel your child needs?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 15 | 88% |
| No | 2 | 12% |
| Total | 17 | 100% |

4. Do you feel you could have received the help you needed if PACER services had not been available?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 1 | 6% |
| No | 16 | 94% |
| Total | 17 | 100% |

**Parent-Professional Collaboration**

PACER's EBD Project staff made ten presentations for 209 professionals and parents about the needs and strengths of families of children with emotional and behavioral disorders. The presentations included information on stigma, cultural competence, service coordination, special education, wraparound, mental health goals and collaboration. Approximately one-third of those attending were persons of color.

| Date | Location | Group | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 08/22/00 | Rochester, MN | Children's Mental Health Collaborative | 13 |
| 08/23/00 | Jordan, MN | MN River Valley Special Ed Cooperative | 31 |
| 08/31/00 | Buhl, MN | Mesabi Juvenile Corrections Facility Staff | 20 |
| 09/19/00 | St. Cloud, MN | Children's Mental Health Case Managers | 22 |
| 10/24/00 | Rochester, MN | Mayo Mixer | 33 |
| 11/01/00 | St. Paul, MN | Wilder East Asian Services | 18 |
| 02/13/01 | Plymouth, MN | SEAC Special Education Advisory Council | 30 |
| 04/09/01 | St. Cloud, MN | MACMH Conference Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health | 8 |
| 04/25/01 | St. Cloud, MN | Children's Mental Health Case Managers | 27 |
| 05/14/01 | Minneapolis, MN | Minneapolis Public School Social Workers | 7 |
| Total | | | 209 |

**Meetings, Task Forces, Boards, Committees**

The EBD Project staff met with individuals and small groups from five culturally specific agencies to provide training on how and when to refer parents for services. Technical assistance to their parent support groups through presentations, written materials in their native language, and in-service workgroups was also provided. Many of the parents involved with these agencies were referred to PACER for services as a direct result of working with these agencies.

The EBD Project also participated on 13 local, state and national task forces, boards, and committees affecting children's mental health services, at 53 meetings. More than 500 people attended these meetings.

| Type of Meeting | Number of times Met |
|---|---|
| Children's Mental Health Subcommittee | 11 |
| Co-chair of Respite Workgroup for Children's Subcommittee | 8 |
| Separate Sites Leadership Group | 6 |
| Policy Academy on Developing Systems of Care for Children With Mental Health Needs and their Families | 3, plus a 4 day workshop |
| Department of Corrections, Female Juvenile Offenders Task force | 1 |
| EBD Criteria Hearings | 2 |
| Children's Mental Health Conference planning committee | 4 |
| Special Education Directors Retreat | 3-day retreat |
| Special Education Directors Forum | 1 |
| State Legislators meeting regarding CMH legislation | 2 |
| Citizens League Breakfast on CMH issues | 1 |
| CMH Diversity Teleconference | 1 |
| Parent Leadership Summit planning committee | 6 |
| Total | 53 |

## Conclusion

PACER Center continues to focus on families of children with emotional or behavioral disorders through the EBD Project. The children's mental health system in Minnesota, under the political structure of the Children's Mental Health Act, has not only encouraged managed behavioral health care, but has also heightened awareness for schools to be accountable to the multi-faceted needs of children with emotional and behavioral issues. The EBD Project staff has closely worked with the department to develop responsible and family friendly services for children and their families. This continues to remain a commitment of PACER.

During the past 12 months more than 1,700 EBD related calls were received from parents and professionals statewide and nation wide. In addition workshops, trainings, presentations and parent-professional collaborations were presented to more than 2,500 parents, family members, and professionals serving children with EBD. The increased number of calls indicates the heightened awareness for continued service in the area of children's mental health. PACER's EBD Project remains committed to meeting that need.

# American Indian Parent Network Project

PACER provides workshops specific to the needs of American Indian families. As parents have become active and involved participants in IEP planning, the demand for culture-specific workshops and assistance has grown for those families who may not be comfortable participating in PACER's general workshops.

Beginning in 1996 with assistance from The Bush Foundation, PACER began a three-year project to expand services to Indian communities by creating advocates within communities with the capacity to respond to family needs. With additional support from the Otto Bremer Foundation, The Carolyn Foundation, Medtronic Foundation, Honeywell and The St. Paul Companies, PACER expanded the American Indian Community Resource parent's position on White Earth Reservation. American Indian Resource Consultant position was established at PACER with assistance from The McKnight Foundation. The responsibilities of the staff resource persons are to assist families of children with emotional disabilities or who are at-risk of developing such problems, to locate and access mental health and educational services, and to assist them in understanding their rights.

The main goals of the American Indian Project are to:

- Help strengthen families' capacity to nurture their children in the seven-county metropolitan American Indian community.
- Help American Indian parents learn about resources available to them.
- Encourage parents to become resources and leaders in their communities.
- Develop collaborative relationships with agencies and individuals who serve Indian children with emotional/behavior disorders or who are at-risk for emotional/behavioral disorders.

**Help strengthen families' capacity to nurture their children in the seven-county metropolitan American Indian community**

To accomplish this goal, the Project provides individual assistance and information by phone or mail to American Indian families. This year, individual assistance was provided to 362 parents and professionals. Staff attending 29 IEP meetings, court attendance and staffings.

The calls were received from Indian parents and professionals related to education and mental health planning during the past year. The major concern expressed by parents, regardless of the area of the state in which they resided, related to strong feelings that the persons working with their children did not understand their children's cultural needs. For the third consecutive year, the most frequently identified issue by Indian families was suspension of their child from school. Many expressed concern that punishment was used indiscriminately for behavioral infractions, even when the child reported that he or she did not know why they were being punished. Many parents believe that minor incidents often escalated into larger behavioral concerns due to the lack of cultural understanding of the adults who worked with the children.

Five workshops were held for the American Indian community reaching 45 individuals with information and resources to help parents to help their child do better in school. Topics included issues of communication and education for parents whose children are at-risk or in crisis situations.

Additionally, American Indian parents and professionals also attended general PACER workshops and trainings.

**Workshops**

| Date | Location | American Indian | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10/18/00 | Minneapolis | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| 11/09/00 | Mahnomen | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| 11/09/00 | White Earth | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| 03/15/01 | Columbia Heights | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 05/17/01 | Columbia Heights | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | | 37 | 8 | 45 |

During this year, planning for a specialized workshop on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder specific to the American Indian communities is being developed. The Project has developed an innovative 2-day advocacy training to reach 20 Indian parents and advocates in the areas of education, juvenile justice, children's mental health and the Indian Child Welfare Act. This training will take place during the 2001-02 year.

**Help American Indian parents learn about resources available to them**

A directory of Indian advocates in the Twin Cities listing their area of expertise and identifying community links such as other funded projects is in the development stage.

PACER staff provided information to the 95 American Indian staff of 13 agencies about the Project and the needs and strengths of Indian families.

| Date | Agency | Attending |
|---|---|---|
| 09/20/00 | Indian Child Welfare Council | 12 |
| 09/11/00 | Minneapolis American Indian Center | 3 |
| 09/19/00 | Ain Dah Yung Shelter | 5 |
| 10/03/00 | Spring Lake Park Indian Education | 7 |
| 10/05/00 | Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center | 2 |
| 10/18/00 | Legal Rights Center, Inc. | 2 |
| 10/26/00 | American Indian Family and Children's Center | 7 |
| 11/03/00 | Indian Child Welfare Law Center | 6 |
| 11/14/00 | Upper Midwest American Indian Center | 12 |
| 11/16/00 | American Indian Chamber of Commerce | 20 |
| 01/10/01 | Thunder Spirit Lodge | 5 |
| 01/19/01 | Mille Lacs Band Family Services | 12 |
| 02/15/01 | Division of Indian Works | 2 |
| Total | | 95 |

Nine presentations at national conferences reached 637 people and of those 305 (48%) were identified as American Indian.

American Indian Project staff distributed more than 5,000 Project brochures at health fairs, pow-wows and conferences during the past year. One of the exciting aspects of this project has been its high visibility nationally.

Much information has been requested about this project by other states and localities that are interested in developing services to American Indian families.

**National Conferences***

| Date | Group | Location | American Indian | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12/14/00 | Lakota Nation Education Conference | Rapid City, SD | 78 | 0 | 78 |
| 12/14/00 | Lakota Nation Education Conference | Rapid City, SD | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| 03/30/01 | Parent/Professional Collaboration Conf. | Albuquerque, NM | 120 | 130 | 250 |
| 0524-25/01 | Youth with Mental Health/Chemical Dependency | Poarch Creek Reservation, AL | 70 | 0 | 70 |
| 06/28-29/01 | Discipline, Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports | Colorado Springs, CO | 17 | 0 | 17 |
| 01/17-21/01 | BIA Indian Education Programs Advisory Board meeting | Phoenix, AZ | 18 | 0 | 18 |
| 01/29/01 | Wraparound/Systems of Care | Riverton, WY | 38 | 32 | 70 |
| 03/19-21-01 | BIA National School Reform Conference | San Diego, CA | 90 | 10 | 100 |
| 04/18/01 | Parent Education Group | Moapa Reservation, Las Vegas, NV | 22 | 0 | 22 |
| Total | | | 465 | 172 | 637 |

* These conferences reported and counted in the FAPE Project

**Encourage parents to become resources and leaders in their communities**

During the past year 2 trainings, 19 parents were trained as Indian Family Resource Consultants to assist American Indian parents with information, support and in-person assistance at school, mental health or related meetings.

**Trainings**

| Date | Location | Parents | Prof. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 08/15/00 | Red Wing | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| 10/12/00 | Bemidji | 11 | 3 | 14 |
| Total | | 19 | 5 | 24 |

Eleven American Indians parents were trained at the Bemidji training as advocates for families of children with emotional or behavioral disorders as part of PACER's EBD project.

**Develop collaborative relationships with agencies and individuals who serve Indian children with emotional/behavior disorders or who are at-risk for emotional/behavioral disorders.**

To aid families in accessing needed information, PACER has selected agencies that will have an advocate in their office from one-half to one day a week. These are:

- Minneapolis American Indian Center
- Minnesota Indian Woman's Resource Center
- American Indian Opportunities and Industrialization Center

During this first year, office hours are being held every other week at Ain Dah Yung on Wednesday afternoon.

American Indian Project staff has also been asked to serve on the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Exceptional Education Advisory Board and OSEP monitoring committee.

## Conclusion

Specific services for American Indian families are an important addition to the array of services offered by PACER for all families. Because Indian families have been disproportionately represented in special education and juvenile justice programs, and have been underrepresented in gifted and talented programs, a focus on the unique needs of these families is needed to ensure that families have the information they need to act as effective advocates for their children. This Project will continue to inform, encourage, educate, and support Indian families about their rights to services and their roles as participants in planning how those services are provided to their child and family.

# State Improvement Grant

PACER Center received funding through a grant awarded by Minnesota's Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL) for participation in the federally funded State Improvement Grant (SIG). The focus of PACER's activities under this grant are 1) to conduct statewide training to effectively involve parents of children with disabilities in interagency delivery systems and 2) to conduct statewide trainings to promote school to work transition opportunities for students interagency collaboration and coordinated services. The following activities reflect PACER's work from July 1, 2000 to May 31, 2001.

**Statewide Trainings**

PACER's goal is to provide outreach training and technical assistance to parents and students who have reached the age of majority on issues involving interagency roles and responsibilities in the transition from school to post school living, (for example, post secondary education, training, employment and community living.)

During this first year of the grant, PACER has worked with CFL to design promising practices materials for parents that can be used in the development of the transition section of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) that is called the Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP). PACER has worked with CFL on the development of materials for parents on the IIIP process. These promising practices and strategies will also illustrate how transition plans could be aligned with the proposed Minnesota Graduation Standards.

Minnesota has instituted a new law that will coordinate services for children who receive special education services from school and at least one other public agency that is called the Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP).

Planning and update meetings with the State Improvement Grant steering committee and staff in preparation for the IIIP training and these were held:

| Date | Location | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 08/02/00 | Minneapolis | SIG staff at PACER |
| 11/08/00 | Minneapolis | SIG staff at PACER |
| 12/05/00 | St. Paul | SIG Steering Committee Meeting |
| 12/18/00 | Minneapolis | SIG Update Meeting |
| 03/26/01 | Plymouth | SIG Steering Committee Meeting |
| 04/11/01 | Minneapolis | SIG staff at PACER |

A PACER staff member serves on the committee (MNSIC workgroup) to further develop the IIIP for K-14 age group and as part of this committee has met on the following dates:

| Date | Location | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 07/27/00 | Roseville | MNSIC workgroup |
| 08/17/00 | Roseville | MNSIC workgroup |
| 09/12/00 | Roseville | MNSIC workgroup |
| 10/24/00 | Roseville | Interagency meeting |
| 11/15/00 | Roseville | MNSIC workgroup |
| 01/17/01 | Roseville | K-14 workgroup |

PACER staff met with SIG staff from Minnesota's Department of Children Families and Learning (CFL) to plan activities on IIIP training

| Date | Location | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 08/03/00 | Minneapolis | 5 |
| 11/08/00 | Minneapolis | 5 |

PACER staff received training on IIIP from the CFL staff

| Date | Location | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 02/23/01 | Minneapolis | 4 |
| 03/20/01 | Minneapolis | 3 |

**Statewide Conference**

To implement training programs for parents of children with disabilities on their role on local advisory committees and state and local interagency coordinating committees, PACER staff designed a training on how special education decisions are made at the local, state and federal levels and how each impacts the education of children with disabilities. Part of the training includes recommendations on how parents might participate and impact decisions at each level.

To facilitate this, PACER designed and conducted a statewide conference with a priority on parent leadership at the local and state levels.

The First Leadership Training Conference was held at PACER Center on May 18-19, 2001. Thirty-six parents attended this conference from through out the state. Some of the topics of this training were effective participation on interagency committees, special education funding and impacting policy. From this group, PACER identified out of the 36 parents, 33 who were available for possible membership on interagency committees in their communities.

Evaluations from the Conference were filled out by 27 (75%) out of the 36 parents attending. Not all of the questions were answered by all the participants.

1. How would you rate the sessions on the first day?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 11 | 41% |
| Very Good | 10 | 37% |
| Good | 3 | 11% |
| Fair | 2 | 7% |
| Poor | 1 | 4% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

What did you find the most helpful?

- "The big picture"
- "Finance information panel from CFL"

2. How would you rate the sessions on the first day?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 13 | 59% |
| Very Good | 7 | 32% |
| Good | 0 | 0% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 2 | 9% |
| Total | 22 | 100% |

What did you find the most helpful?

- "Questions and answers"
- "The handouts"
- "It takes only a few people to initiate change."
- "Presenter was knowledgeable and interesting."

3. How would you rate the conference overall?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 11 | 44% |
| Very Good | 9 | 36% |
| Good | 2 | 8% |
| Fair | 2 | 8% |
| Poor | 1 | 4% |
| Total | 25 | 100% |

4. Has this conference made you more confident in your knowledge of special education?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 20 | 83% |
| No | 4 | 17% |
| Total | 24 | 100% |

5. Has this conference made you more confident in your ability to participate on an interagency committee?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 19 | 79% |
| No | 4 | 17% |
| Already Involved | 1 | 4% |
| Total | 24 | 100% |

**Statewide Transition Trainings**

Another component of the Statewide Improvement Grant was to conduct statewide training to promote school to work transition opportunities for students through interagency collaboration and coordinated services. To accomplish this SIG transition workgroup met 4 times.

| Date | Location | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 01/31/01 | Minneapolis | 4 |
| 02/14/01 | Minneapolis | 4 |
| 02/27/01 | Minneapolis | 4 |
| 05/07/01 | St. Paul | 4 |

Each year as part of this grant, PACER staff will reach 300 to 500 parents and others with technical assistance devised and developed from the SIG transition workgroup meetings. Eight presentations were held reaching 102 individuals and technical assistance was provided on the phone for 602 individuals. Included in this number were 46 IEP staffing meetings.

**Transition Presentations**

| Date | Group | Location | Parents | Prof. | Others | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 01/29/01 | Autism Program | Minneapolis | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| 03/08/01 | CTIC | Anoka | 1 | 19 | 0 | 20 |
| 03/22/01 | Groves School | St. Louis Park | 8 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| 03/22/01 | Lakeville Transition Classes & Parents | Minneapolis | 10 | 2 | 12 | 24 |
| 05/09/01 | Vector Transition Students | Anoka | 0 | 1 | 11 | 12 |
| 05/09/01 | Transition Students | Bloomington | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 05/15/01 | Transition Stakeholders | Minnetonka | 3 | 11 | 0 | 14 |
| 05/16/01 | Vector Transition Students | Anoka | 0 | 3 | 11 | 14 |
| Total | | | 26 | 40 | 36 | 102 |

PACER provided technical assistance on the phone to 602 people and attended 46 IEP meetings. The breakdown of the assistance is as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parents | 411 | 68% |
| Professionals | 156 | 26% |
| Consumers | 31 | 5% |
| Advocacy Representatives | 4 | 1% |
| Total | 602 | 100% |

## Conclusion

PACER Center was pleased with the response to this project. During its next year, the staff will conduct parent workshops on the Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP) and transition planning process. PACER will present another statewide conference and identify an additional 25 parents that will be available as potential parent leaders for membership on special education and interagency advisory councils. Staff will provide training and technical assistance to parents and parent advocacy groups throughout the state.

# Surrogate Parent
# Foster Parent Project

Through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL) in 2000-2001, PACER provided training, information and advocacy services to surrogate parents, foster parents and professionals throughout the state regarding the Minnesota surrogate parent rules. Surrogate parents are trained to serve as advocates for students who are under state guardianship, or whose parents are unknown or unavailable to represent them through the educational process. Additionally, parents in Minnesota can request that a surrogate parent be named to represent their child.

During the school year 2000-2001, PACER Center, Inc. carried out a project through a contract with the Department of Children, Families and Learning, Special Education Section. The purposes of the project were as follows:

- To present one session about surrogate parents to new Directors of Special Education before school begins, at the annual State Directors Conference, and other staff development conferences and programs.
- To present two to three sessions for surrogate parents, potential surrogate parents, and foster parents.
- To respond to all telephone calls and mail from surrogate parents, potential surrogate parents, foster parents and professionals seeking information and answers to questions regarding surrogate rules, procedures and resources.
- To finish the revision of the Administrator's Manual and brochure for surrogate parents based on the new Regulations and law. The 3-ring notebook will begin to be revised during 2001-2002.

**Workshops:**
**Surrogate Parent and Foster Parent Training**

During the 2000-2001 school year, PACER provided information, training and advocacy services to foster parents, surrogate parents, and professionals throughout Minnesota. Surrogate parents are trained to be advocates for students with disabilities who are under state guardianship, or whose parents are unknown or completely unavailable to represent them in educational matters. In Minnesota, parents can also request that a surrogate parent be named.

PACER presented two workshops:

| Date | Location | Parent | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10/18/00 | Minneapolis | 15 | 15 |
| 11/04/00 | St. Cloud | 5 | 5 |
| Total | | 20 | 20 |

**County Personnel and School Personnel Training**

Although the goal of this activity was to train new Directors of Special Education about surrogate parents, when surveyed, they said that this would not serve their needs. Instead, through agreement with the Special Education Division, a new survey was developed, sent out, and tabulated on district efforts regarding Special Education Advisory Councils. Last year a brief survey was e-mailed to all special education directors.

During 2000-01, a more detailed survey was developed in cooperation with CFL and e-mailed in July 2000, to all special education directors (75). The purpose was to gain information in order to offer effective technical assisitance to districts in their implementation of the State requirement to have such Councils. There were 46 (61%) districts and cooperatives who responed to the survey. The responses to the questions were entered into a database. CFL was able to use this information in January 2001 to publicize proposed changes to special education rules.

## A Sample of Survey Questions and Results

1. What is the composition of your Special Education Advisory Council?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parents | 461 | 65% |
| Professionals | 226 | 32% |
| Others | 18 | 3% |
| Total | 705 | 100% |

2. How long has your Council been in existence?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Less than a year | 2 | 4.5% |
| One year | 8 | 18% |
| Two years | 2 | 4.5% |
| Over 2 years | 32 | 73% |
| Total | 44 | 100% |

3. Does your Council represent an individual district or a cooperative?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| District | 28 | 61% |
| Cooperative | 18 | 39% |
| Total | 46 | 100% |

4. Is your Special Education Advisory Council a subgroup of another committee?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 6 | 14% |
| No | 36 | 84% |
| Not applicable | 1 | 2% |
| Total | 43 | 100% |

5. Do individuals volunteer?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 22 | 54% |
| Nominated | 8 | 20% |
| Both | 10 | 24% |
| Not applicable | 1 | 2% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

## Individual Assistance

During 2000-2001, PACER provided individual assistance to 89 surrogate parents, potential surrogate parents and foster parents (foster parents are eligible to serve as surrogate parents when appointed). The calls and mail received regarding information relating to surrogate parent issues were from surrogate parents and professionals who had requests for assistance on individual IEP issues as well as requests for information and guidance on the surrogate parent provisions in law and rules.

### Revision of Materials

The manual, *Children in Need of Surrogate Parents: Program Rules and Procedures in Minnesota, A Handbook for Administrators*, was revised. The new manual reflects changes made by IDEA '97 and the federal regulations. The revision will be published in the next grant period because Minnesota has propsed changing surrogate language in the Minnesota Rules. The surrogate brochure has also been revised. A plan for revising and updating the parent training materials has been developed.

## Conclusion

Training efforts will continue to focus on reaching foster parents because they represent the largest number of potential surrogate parents in the state. PACER will continue to respond to questions regarding laws and procedures relating to the surrogate rules and to serve the individual needs of surrogate parents.

# Grandparent-To-Grandparent Project

PACER Center's Grandparent-to-Grandparent Project continues to provide support and information for grandparents whose grandchildren have special needs. The Project's goals are:

- To support, inform and empower grandparents
- To meet other grandparents of children with special needs and share joy, concerns, grief, and common interests
- To learn helpful strategies that enable grandparents to be helpful to their children and families, and to encourage communication between generations
- To learn about special programs and services available for children with disabilities and their families

## GRANDPARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Support group meetings continued to be a combination of informational presentations and support meetings. Grandparents selected presentation topics, and the grandparents themselves facilitate them. Several grandparents in the group have difficulty in attending meetings because they also provide care services for their grandchildren. Others cannot attend during the winter months due to travel.

The Grandparent-to-Grandparent Project scheduled eight events from September 2000 through April 2001. September started with two special events. The first was a picnic for grandparents and grandchildren on Saturday, September 9 at a park with a fully accessible playground. Seven grandparents, four of their adult children and eight grandchildren were present. The second event was on September 23 when eleven grandparents and 17 of their adult children and grandchildren were able to enjoy a wonderful day at the Minnesota Zoo, complete with dolphin show, monorail rides, bird shows, lunch and tee shirts.

Six grandparent support group meetings were scheduled from October to April. Special presentations included one on legislative issues and another on making craft activities accessible to children of all ages and abilities. Six grandparents attended PACER's Open House on November 28 and took a tour of the new building. Positive comments and congratulations were offered on the increased space for the computer resource center, the craft room, the easy parking and the building décor.

| Date | Grandparents | Adult Children | Grandchildren |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09/09/00 | 7 | 4 | 8 |
| 09/23/00 | 11 | 8 | 9 |
| 10/10/00* | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 11/28/00 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 12/12/00* | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 01/09/01* | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 02/13/01* | Meeting canceled due to extreme cold weather. | | |
| 03/13/01* | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 04/10/01* | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 51 | 12 | 17 |

*Support group meetings

Presentations this year included legislative advocacy and dealing with local and state agencies (non-school issues). Grandparent support and group problem solving remained a priority for the participants this year. A great deal of concern was expressed concerning the shortage of home care staff available to meet the needs of their

grandchildren. Quite a few of the grandparents fill in when home health care staff cannot be obtained. Others had specific concerns and wanted to know how others in the group would resolve them.

**Technical Assistance**

PACER received 86 requests for information about the Grandparent-to-Grandparent project or about grandparent support in general. This included the 40 contacts from individuals and or organizations for individual assistance through phone consultations, sending information, email, faxes and visits to PACER's Web site during the program year, 2000-01. The contacts reflect the following:

- 69 percent (69%) or 59 contacts were received from individuals in Minnesota and 27 (31%) contacts were from states other than Minnesota.
- Grandparent's contacts numbered 49 (57%), and many of these contacts were made after reading about the grandparent project in PACER publications, visiting PACER's Web site, or being listed as a resource in other publications.
- Of the 86 contacts, there were 17 (20%) new requests from grandparents and professionals for information and support for grandparents raising their grandchildren. Most of these requests were concerning custodial, visitation, making 'parent-type' decisions, and the frustration of dealing with multiple state or local agencies.
- Fourteen (16%) of the contacts were from grandparents in states other than Minnesota requesting support for themselves.

The National Center for Grandparent Support at PACER has had no contact with the groups initiating grandparent support programs in either Massachusetts or Pennsylvania this past year. The group in New Mexico appears to be offering support to grandparents (including grandparents who are primary caregivers) and meeting fairly regularly.

Grandparents' comments about the program include:

- "PACER offers so much for families – the computer resource center, the 'know where to go to get it done' approach to problems, the advocacy for our grandson, and this support group. Thank you."
- "Thanks for all that you do for the grandparents – the listening and advice at our meetings. We really appreciate it and don't often take the time to say so!"

## CONCLUSION

Grandparents whose grandchildren have disabilities need support and information on disabilities and services. Information provides hope for a better future for their grandchildren. PACER's Grandparent-to-Grandparent Program encourages grandparents to grow in the understanding that their grandchild is just that, a child. His or her disability is only a part of him or her.

PACER remains committed to supporting and strengthening families whose children have disabilities. The Grandparent-to-Grandparent Program supports this commitment and the National Center for Grandparent Support continues to promote the development of support programs in other states.

# Project PRIDE
# PACER's Rehabilitation Act Information and Disability Education

In October of 1993, PACER Center received one of six grants awarded nationally by the Rehabilitation Services Administration in Washington, DC. The purpose of the three-year grant was to develop a training program to teach adults and youth with disabilities and their families about the newly amended Rehabilitation Act. The Project staff successfully completed the three-year grant program and was awarded two more grants for three [illegible] each. Many of the project goals have been expanded over this extended period of time. One particularly important addition is carrying out training for Oklahoma, Iowa, and Ohio parent training and information centers, to build their capacity to train families in their state about the Rehabilitation Act.

The Rehabilitation Act is a federal law that provides legislative and economic support for the adult vocational rehabilitation service systems for each of the states and territories. It was originally passed in 1973. The amendments of 1992 reflect the changing philosophy in rehabilitation services and the needs of individuals with disabilities in the '90s. It provides federal funds and support for training and placement of persons with disabilities into employment in competitive labor market settings. It also provides training to enable the person with a disability to make the best choices about his or her living situation.

The Rehabilitation Act makes it clear that the public policy is one of inclusion, full participation and integration as it relates to person with disabilities. It makes provisions for training, equipment, and other services that people with disabilities may need in order to work and live independently in their community.

The law states specifically that: "Disability is a natural part of human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to:

- "Live independently
- Enjoy self determination
- Make choices
- Contribute to society
- Pursue meaningful careers
- Enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American Society" (Section 2(a)(3))

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act:**

Interest in the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) continues to be strong. Both the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act are civil rights laws that protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination. Project PRIDE has been designated as a National Center of Expertise on the Americans with Disabilities Act by the Technical Assistance about Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA). This support has enabled Project PRIDE to build a reference library, obtain staff training, provide information and referral services to other parent training and information centers (PTIs), and contribute to the development of new materials on this topic reflecting a parent training perspective.

**Level I – Basic Training**

From October 1, 2000 through May 17, 2001 project Pride staff presented 8 basic workshops for 252 participants. The basic level workshop is targeted to young adults and their parents. Breakout sessions were

offered for young adults. A variety of activities were available depending upon developmental stage and their preference. These options included a transition board game, setting and achieving goal exercises, sharing of hopes, interests and dreams and how these might relate to career discussions. Sixty eight percent of the attendees were consumers and parents. Specific information about these workshops follows:

| Date | Location | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 11/09/00 | Maplewood, MN | 33 |
| 11/14/00 | Marshall, MN | 24 |
| 11/30/00 | Minneapolis, MN | 26 |
| 02/06/01 | Willmar, MN | 21 |
| 03/06/01 | Mankato, MN | 53 |
| 03/07/01 | Albert Lee, MN | 27 |
| 04/03/01 | Cambridge, MN | 37 |
| 04/04/01 | Little Falls, MN | 31 |
| Total | | 252 |

Evaluations were completed by 123 (49%) participants. Not all persons answered all questions. Young adults in attendance did not fill out evaluations. When the total exceeds 123, more than one answer may have been given.

| 1. How would you rate this workshop? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 41 | 36% |
| Very Good | 54 | 48% |
| Good | 17 | 15% |
| Fair | 1 | 1% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 113 | 100% |

| 2. Was this workshop helpful to you? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 122 | 99% |
| No | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 123 | 100% |

| 3. Are you a (n): | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parent/Relative | 100 | 65% |
| Professionals | 40 | 26% |
| Individual with a disability | 4 | 2% |
| Advocate | 11 | 7% |
| Total | 155 | 100% |

4. What is your youth's primary disability? / What is your primary disability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Developmental Disability | 50 | 33% |
| Learning Disability | 21 | 14% |
| Attention Deficit Disorder | 31 | 21% |
| Cerebral Palsy | 2 | 1% |
| Mental Health | 16 | 11% |
| Emotional Behavior Disorder | 13 | 9% |
| Sensory Impaired | 5 | 3% |
| Physically Disabled | 6 | 4% |
| Traumatic Brain Injury | 1 | 1% |
| Other | 4 | 3% |
| Total | 149 | 100% |

5. How old is the person with a disability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 - 9 | 4 | 3% |
| 10 - 15 | 38 | 29% |
| 16 - 22 | 73 | 56% |
| 23 - 30 | 14 | 11% |
| 31 - 45 | 2 | 1% |
| Total | 131 | 100% |

6. More specific comments:

The most valuable part of the workshop was?

- "Expanded awareness of transition IEPS. what needs to be included, what should be, creative thinking.
- "Information about reasonable accommodations with examples."
- "Sharing of personal experiences and success stories."
- "How the school can and must help the student transition to work."
- "Explaining Supplemental Security Income"
- "Learning about the options that are out there especially when related to post-secondary education."
- "What happens educationally and financially after high school."
- "We are in a small rural area and it was an "up" experience to attend and realize that PACER is out there and available."
- "Learning that vocational rehabilitation is available life long."
- "Emphasis on focusing on strengths and the fact that it is a journey."

What suggestions do you have for improving the workshop?

- "More in depth on each area"
- "How to get parents networked"
- "Suggestions for families under stress because of a child's disability."
- "Hold this at least 4 times a year."
- "Best practices models."
- "A worksheet on programs that are working in other rural areas that we could duplicate."

Any other comments or suggestions?

- "Thank you for being here for us and saying 'use these services'".
- "Was intending on giving up on getting help."
- "Provide more workshops for us."
- "Three hours went by very quickly. Much was covered, but it didn't seem rushed at all."

**Specialized Workshops**

From October 1, 2000 through May 17, 2001 project Pride staff presented 7 special workshops for 239 participants. Two workshops focused on technology options for employment or postsecondary needs of the transitioning young adult. These workshops incorporated assistive technology interaction among participants as supported by the PACER's Computer Resource Center. Seventy percent of the attendees were consumers and parents. Specific information about these workshops follows:

| Date | Location | Topic | Attending |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06/14/00 | St. Cloud | Extended Employment | 48 |
| 11/15/00 | St. Paul | ADA & Employment | 42 |
| 11/16/00 | Mankato | ADA & Employment | 19 |
| 12/19/00 | Burnsville | Transition and Assistive Technology | 16 |
| 03/13/01 | Minneapolis | First Jobs | 12 |
| 03/17/01 | Minneapolis | Transition and Assistive Technology | 34 |
| 04/09/01 | St Cloud | MN Association for Children's Mental Health | 68 |
| Total | | | 239 |

Evaluations were completed by 37 participants (15%). Not all persons answered all questions.

1. How would you rate this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 17 | 47% |
| Very Good | 15 | 42% |
| Good | 4 | 11% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 36 | 100% |

2. Have you learned anything new from attending this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 37 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 37 | 100% |

3. Are you a (n):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parent/Relative | 6 | 14% |
| Professional | 24 | 56% |
| Individual with a disability | 10 | 23% |
| Advocate | 3 | 7% |
| Total* | 43 | 100% |

*More than one answer may have been given.

4. What is your youth's primary disability? / What is your primary disability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Developmental Disability | 7 | 22% |
| Learning Disability | 4 | 13% |
| Attention Deficit Disorder | 4 | 13% |
| Emotional Behavior Disorder | 3 | 10% |
| Cerebral Palsy | 3 | 10% |
| Physically Disabled | 3 | 10% |
| Sensory Impaired | 3 | 10% |
| Traumatic Brain Injury | 2 | 6% |
| Mental Health | 1 | 3% |
| Other | 1 | 3% |
| Total | 31 | 100% |

5. How old is the person with a disability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 - 9 | 3 | 10% |
| 10 - 15 | 7 | 23% |
| 16 - 22 | 18 | 58% |
| 23 - 30 | 1 | 3% |
| 31 - 64 | 2 | 6% |
| Total | 31 | 100% |

More specific comments:

1. The most valuable part of the workshop was?
   - "Learning that everyone has something to offer no matter what the disability."
   - "The complete explanation of Vocational Rehabilitation services and emphasis on post-secondary assistance."
   - "Learning about different assistive technology options available."
   - "Consumer rights and laws."
   - "The process flow from acquiring services to employment."
   - "To hear that the role of the "team" is to support the decision of the person with a disability."
   - "Going over the Federal regulations and changes that have occurred."
   - "The presentation about accommodations available beyond assistive technology."
   - "Learning about available resources. What things to think about for the future. What we can do now."

2. What suggestions do you have for improving the workshop?
   - "Too much content for period available."
   - "Longer workshop to cover more information."
   - "How to work through the school district to attain these services."
   - "How to write the grants that are often needed to acquire the equipment."
   - "What to do to help my son get job interviews, skills, to get him employed."
   - "More details regarding IDEA and its implications."

**Telephone follow-up survey**

During April telephone calls were made to 10 people who attended Level I workshops. The purpose of the follow-up surveys are: (1) to determine how the participants evaluated the services they received: and (2) to determine whether the participants were able to use the information they received. Participants were randomly selected from registration lists of persons who attended.

**Evaluation results**

1. One hundred percent of those surveyed reported that the information presented was helpful.
   Comments
   - "The presentation was so helpful. Could have been longer."
   - "Concise information and the many handouts."

2. Eighty percent of those surveyed reported that they feel more confident in dealing with rehabilitation professionals, school professionals or other service providers because of information or support they received from PACER Center.
   Comments
   - "I feel confident that I could get assistance from PACER if I need it in the future as I advocate for students."
   - "I wish I had attended PACER workshops years ago when my child was younger. Being in a 'smaller' school system, we didn't realize what was available and how to achieve it! I will highly recommend PACER to anyone who has a child with a disability."

3. One hundred percent of those surveyed reported that they feel more knowledgeable about transition planning and how it can help prepare for adult life.
   Comments
   - "I am the Transition Specialist at Rehabilitation Services. The discussion on Rehabilitation Services was very good, and I appreciate the new insights."

**Level II - Training and Assistance to Individuals with Minority Background**

PACER provides information and training to assist Southeast Asians and African Americans to become more aware of how to use rehabilitation services. Meetings for individuals from minority groups are kept small to provide individual attention and to allow for interpreting requirements. The intent is for the sessions to be very informal and welcoming. Also, because services are quite often viewed differently across a variety of cultures, individualized approaches to accessing rehabilitation services are customized to the family support system.

Project PRIDE has seen an increased level of attendance from minority populations at its workshops, as well as in requests for individual advocacy. The number of people attending workshops or receiving individual advocacy are determined only by observation or incidental information conveyed during contact with them. It is believed that the numbers of persons from minority communities are larger than statistics show. Because all attendees are incorporated into the general population of people reached by training sessions or individual advocacy contacts, the follow-up calls reflect the general population and are not separated into racial or cultural groups.

Project PRIDE's current project has moved from being the organizer of workshops focusing on diverse populations to one of a supportive role to ethnic community leaders. In this role, Project PRIDE facilitates two meetings representing one of the four different cultures, Southeast Asian, Hispanic, Native American and African-American, each year to explore what transition, independent living, employment, and choice means for the youth with disabilities within their family unit. For each of the culture groups, one meeting is held for the parents and the second meeting is with agencies, employers and/or professionals from the ethnic or racial group.

Project PRIDE has developed a short video targeting the transition and Rehabilitation Service needs, and feasible work and community accommodations of the Hmong cultural group. The fifteen-minute video is almost completed. The Minnesota Department of Rehabilitation (DRS) committed to partial funding and collaboration on the video.

**Level III - Individual Information and Assistance**

Project Pride provided individual assistance to 392 people through phone, mail and individual consultation in the office. Questions being addressed have included advocacy services for individuals in accessing the vocational rehabilitation service system, consultation on the Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP), employment discrimination issues, employer ADA questions and concerns, and transition issues for young adults leaving school for work or post-secondary schools. Questions concerning disability culture issues, civil rights, accessibility and reasonable accommodations have been steadily increasing.

**Public Information and Dissemination**

Project PRIDE informed more than 70,000 members of the community, including individuals with disabilities and family members each year about this project's activities and rehabilitation services through the media, PACER's newsletter, the *PACESETTER*, PACER's Web site, and presentations that were made to 150 people at conferences. Special efforts are made to reach persons with severe disabilities and underrepresented people.

Project PRIDE carried out this goal by:

- Developing and disseminating written materials on disability-related topics;
  Over 60,000 flyers and 4,000 brochures were mailed.
- Parent Brief published by the National Transition Network, *One-Stop Workforce Centers and Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities*. Additional Parent Briefs on *Age of Majority* and *Transition* are in the publication process.
- Sending news releases, articles and other communication to newspapers;
  One article is in process for one issue of the *PACESETTER* (circulation 80,000 people)
  Over 200 news releases were distributed.
- Presenting information on local radio and television stations to reach people with disabilities and their families in culturally diverse and under served populations. Public Radio station KFAI, *Disabled and Proud*, radio talk show, Project PRIDE staff appeared as a guest.
- Communicate to organizations and groups to inform 150 people about the project activities and communicate the benefits of rehabilitation services for people with disabilities.

Information on Project Pride was provided 15 times to approximately 290 professionals. These communications have included:

1. State Rehabilitation Advisory Council 6 times to approximately 90 professionals.
2. State Steering Committee ADA Minnesota 6 times to approximately 60 total community leaders.
3. TATRA conference 1 time, 65 professionals.
4. Public Hearing on Rehabilitation Advisory Council to approximately 45 professionals.
5. ADA Minnesota conference 1 times, to approximately 32 professionals and business leaders.

**Level IV – Training of Trainers and Professional Collaboration**

Project PRIDE will present a two-day training of trainers for professionals, and families (the group will include roughly equivalent numbers of individuals with disabilities, family members/advocates and rehabilitation professionals) on issues and information about rehabilitation services. As part of the expanded Project PRIDE, the training would be held in Iowa, Oklahoma, Missouri and/or Ohio on alternative years. The first year's training took place in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The second year's training took place in Iowa, June 21 and 22, 2001. The training that they requested consisted of a basic introduction to the Rehabilitation Act, a comparison of IDEA and Section 504 and how they relate to transition-aged students. Also discussed were post-secondary education and

other options for youth after high school. The Iowa staff presented two workshops assisted by PACER. One workshop was parent-focused with 20 people and the other workshop reached 75 professionals.

Project PRIDE also supports staff participation on task forces and policy committees relating to issues of rehabilitation services, Social Security Work Incentives, employment, and independent living. The task forces and committees Project PRIDE participated on were:

- ADA Minnesota
- State Rehabilitation Advisory Committee
- Charity Review Board

Project Pride presented 9 pre-service and in-service sessions for 408 people. The sessions included disability awareness, accessibility, transition, and ADA legal issues. The Level IV sessions were presented at the following locations:

| Date | Location | Topic | Participant Type | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 08/08/00 | Plymouth, MN | Special Education Advisory Council Annual Retreat | Special Education | 36 |
| 10/09/00 | Minneapolis, MN | Access for Theatre Patrons | Museum Staff | 40 |
| 10/21/00 | Minneapolis, MN | Disability Civil Rights of Children with Disabilities | Children's Hospital Staff | 21 |
| 10/25/00 | Minneapolis, MN | Access Issues for Patrons | Minnesota Orchestra Staff | 6 |
| 01/23/01 | Minneapolis, MN | Hiring Individuals with Disabilities | MN Public Schools | 80 |
| 01/24/01 | Minneapolis, MN | ADA Access Issues | Walker Art Museum Staff | 18 |
| 02/23/01 | Minneapolis, MN | Playground Accessibility | MN Public Schools, Headstart | 77 |
| 03/13/01 | Golden Valley, MN | Visual Supports | Courage Center Staff | 28 |
| 04/20/01 | St. Cloud, MN | Disability Rights Movement | Traumatic Brain Injury Conference | 102 |
| Total | | | | 408 |

Comments:

- "You gave more information in this workshop than in any other workshop that I have attended."
- "The concept of independent travel training for people with disabilities is really frightening for me" regarding my young son and you made this less frightening. I'm going to talk to our IEP team on this."
- "We never even thought about this before" (regarding museum accessibility for individuals with visual impairments)

## CONCLUSION

There has been high interest in receiving information about the Rehabilitation Act and other services for adults with disabilities. Between May 2000 and May of 2001 a total of 41 workshops, trainings, meetings and pre-services and in-services were presented reaching 1,284 people. Individual assistance was provided to 392 individuals. Dissemination of written material about the Rehabilitation Act reached thousands of individuals through newspapers and other media sources. Outreach to parent training centers in other states has been successfully initiated. Project PRIDE has had positive responses from individuals who received training and other services from the project. Project PRIDE has exceeded the number of people to be served in this grant.

# Project Youth: Family Centered Community Transition Services

The purpose of Project Youth is to prepare youth with disabilities in becoming healthy and ready to work. In achieving this purpose, Project Youth works with transition age youth who have disabilities, their families and the professionals who work with them in achieving their employment and educational goals.

Project Youth serves adolescents between the ages of 12 and 24 with chronic illness and/or disabilities and their families as they plan transition to adulthood. In addition, Project Youth works closely and collaborates with various professionals who focus on transition planning including community physicians, teachers, employers, policymakers and agency personnel.

St. Paul is the focus community for Project Youth, although project activities are not limited to St. Paul. The project is funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The project duration is from October 1, 1997 through September 30, 2001.

The goals of the project are:

- To provide training, information and ongoing support for youth with disabilities, so they are better prepared for a health transition to more self-sufficiency.
- To provide training and information for parent of youth with disabilities about preparing for transition to adulthood.
- To collaborate and provide information for community health providers to provide transition services that are culturally sensitive for youth with disabilities.
- To collaborate and provide information to community employers to promote employment opportunities for youth with disabilities.
- To collaborate with state and local agencies to develop comprehensive community based transition services that are family centered and culturally competent and support youth with disabilities to transition to adulthood and increased self-sufficiency.

## Services for Youth

Project Youth provides information and support for youth in developing their self-advocacy skills in meeting their health, educational, and employment needs. During this last year, project staff worked with youth in St. Paul. A youth leadership group for young adults in their transition process met throughout the year. This group of four began with a five-week course with specific topics for each week. This provided a short-term commitment for the youth and gave them an idea about what they would be doing and could look forward to learning. After the five-week program, the four youth decided that they wanted to continue meeting and work on activities that would assist young children in learning about their disabilities. The youths' interest in working with young children never faded, but personal, health, job and educational conflicts interfered with the group's efforts to achieve this goal. The young adults also served in an advisory role to Project Youth. The youth planned and presented a workshop on the important components of a good youth group to parent center directors at the national TATRA conference in June.

In addition to the young adult leadership group, Project Youth worked with two staff members from St. Paul Transition Plus program on an eight-week "Life Skills" class. Eight to 12 youth and 5 staff attended each life skills class. The main focus was on self-advocacy. This important concept was tried into each session's discussion. The topics discussed over the eight weeks included: laws, communication, job interviews and

applications, bus and traffic safety, organization, and health. Related to the topics, each session included an icebreaker and creative activity. These activities were critical to the development of the group. The time was not enough to cover all the important topics related to self-advocacy in life skills, but in the final evaluation, the students significantly improved their understanding of a good self-advocate. The students demonstrated this understanding by giving specific examples of using their new self-advocacy skills in the community. Over the course of the 8 weeks, each session began with a roundtable discussion where students would talk about the latest developments in their lives. As time passed, these discussions became more animated and lasted longer. The students, for the most part, became more supportive of each other's accomplishments.

Following are comments from students' evaluation:

*Student: Give an example of how you've been a self-advocate:*

- "I used to be scared of making appointments over the phone, but now I'm not scared of that."
- "I went by myself to bank and asked why they were charging for bouncing checks. I wasn't given answers so I asked for help from John. John went with me to the bank where they closed the account and started a new one. They fixed everything and reimbursed me $60 for the charges I had paid."
- "I asked for more work hours."
- "I went to my boss and asked for time off."

*Student: How did you feel? Did you feel differently about yourself?*

- "I feel much, much, much better."
- "Very good. In control."
- "I felt good because they stopped charging me and they wouldn't have unless I spoke up. I liked working with someone - I felt powerful walking in with someone."
- "I felt good about myself."

The teacher's comments and examples of the students' self-advocacy skills closely matched the students' self-reports.

**Information and Training for Parents and Professionals**

Project Youth also provides information, individual assistance and resource coordination to families through telephone consultation, personal contacts, workshops and written materials each year. This assistance focuses on individual family concerns such as educational transition plans, employment, and job accommodations including support for health needs, SSI and SSDI assistance. This past year, project staff have provided these services through: 1) workshops and related activities to 335 parents, 224 youth, and 374 professionals for a total of 933 individuals; 2) provided individual assistance to 386 youth and families; and 3) information including meetings, phone support for 159 professionals and printed materials (newsletters, articles, and web site) circulated to more than 86,000 families and professionals.

Direct support included training and information on laws & families rights, role playing, problem solving, walking through transition and IEP process, developing agenda for issues to be addressed, facilitating natural supports, SSI, rehab and county services, Idea and Section 504, transition from high school, disability awareness, and two special informational exchange meetings for Southeast Asian parents. The outcomes or effectiveness of this direct support included increased participation at meetings of all varieties, increased confidence and willingness to address issues and concerns, and IEP's that reflect family input.

**Workshops**

Workshops provide a means for families to obtain information related to a topic of interest that concerns their child and to discuss this topic as it specifically relates to their children's and family's situation. In addition, workshops provide a meeting ground for families who share similar life experiences. The interaction with other families is a rich source of information and support.

This year the project also began offering a youth component to each workshop. There is an important value in bringing the youth of transition age to workshops concerning their future. Although youth attended these workshops in the past, separate activities had not been planned. When youth attend workshops it is important to have activities that are engaging at their level and provide a structure where the youth are comfortable in sharing their questions, concerns, and life experiences. Workshops that offered whole group interactions as well as separate youth activities were the most effective.

The parent workshops are often well attended by professionals. Not only is the information beneficial to professionals, but also the interactions with parents add to the information.

There were 15 workshops presented to 271 parents, 53 youth, and 193 professionals for a total of 517. They are listed as follows:

| Date | Location | Topic | Parents | Youth | Prof. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/15/00 | St. Cloud | Employment Workshop | 24 | 4 | 20 | 48 |
| 06/20/00 | Washington DC | National Transition Summit | 12 | 14 | 136 | 162 |
| 11/04/00 | Hudson, WI | Transition Retreat for St. Paul residents | 11 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| 11/13/00 | Minneapolis | Transition SEAC | 18 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| 11/09 - 11/30/00 | St. Paul | Transition Years workshop | 54 | 0 | 0 | 54 |
| 12/14/00 | St. Paul | Hmong Housing & SSA Information Night | 50 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| 12/14/00 | St. Paul | St. Paul Transition Information Seminar | 8 | 0 | 6 | 14 |
| 02/23/01 | St. Paul | Minnesota Association for Career & Technical Education Special Needs PersonnSel – 3 presentations | 0 | 0 | 21 | 21 |
| 02/26/01 | Minneapolis | Conference – Incorporating health in the transition plan | 30 | 3 | 0 | 33 |
| 03/13/01 | St. Paul | First Jobs | 15 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| 03/17/01* | Minneapolis | Assistive Technology & Employment | 25 | 5 | 0 | 30 |
| 03/22/01 | St. Paul | Transition & employment | 6 | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| 03/29/01 | St. Paul | Transition to post secondary | 15 | 10 | 5 | 30 |
| 04/06/01 | Stout, WI | MN/WI AHEAD | 0 | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| 04/30-05/14/01 | St. Paul | Transition Planning | 3 | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| Total | | | 271 | 53 | 193 | 517 |

* This workshop also listed in the CRC section

Evaluations confirmed the value of the workshops. Workshops are consistently, highly rated. In response to "On the whole, how would you rate this workshop" using a 5-point scale, where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor, workshops on average are rated 4.21.

**Professional Training**

A significant portion of project activities focuses on training and collaborating with health, education, employment and social service professionals. These trainings take many different forms.

Pediatric Resident Training is one type of training. Each month project staff meet with 5 to 9 pediatric residents (2 to 5 at a time) to provide information and discuss the transition issues of youth with disabilities and chronic illness. The training takes place at the University of Minnesota pediatric training program and at Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare. Information is shared about the role of the pediatrician in supporting the youth and their family during the transition process to help ensure youth are healthy and ready to work. This training has been well received by the residents.

Evaluations from the physicians' training:

1. Adolescent issues and needs

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very helpful | 34 | 83% |
| Somewhat helpful | 7 | 17% |
| Not helpful | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

2. The necessity of including health in transition planning

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very helpful | 35 | 85% |
| Somewhat helpful | 6 | 15% |
| Not helpful | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

3. The need to involve adolescents in their own health planning to increase self-determination and compliance

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very helpful | 39 | 95% |
| Somewhat helpful | 2 | 5% |
| Not helpful | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

4. Overall rating of the training

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 15 | 36% |
| Very good | 22 | 54% |
| Good | 4 | 10% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

5. Learn anything?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 41 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

Comments by the physicians:

- "It's absolutely great to hear from someone who has 'been there' for example adolescents with disabilities."
- "Very good talk – made us think about the issues that teenagers with disabilities face. Basically they are the same issues that every other adolescent faces. Taught us how to empower adolescents with disabilities."

- "Excellent presentation that helped illuminates various issues that affect this population."
- "It was a very good presentation and a needed one. As I mentioned, we doctors sometimes 'assume' things, such as: patients with chronic conditions know it and all about it that they know not to engage in certain behaviors. This talk made me aware to disband these assumptions. Thank you for that!"

These evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. One hundred percent of the participants indicate they learned something from the training. In addition, the effectiveness of these training sessions have been noticed by parents who report the professionals who participated in this training to be more involved with joint problem solving and to have better interaction with the youth.

**Presentations**

In addition, staff have been asked to speak on transition issues in a variety of training programs including education, nursing, public health and occupational and physical therapy programs. In addition to the workshops, the following have provided a forum for training professionals this past year:

| Date | Location | Topic | Prof |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06/12/00 | St Paul | Family-Centered Care Coordination for Children with Special Health Care Needs | 77 |
| 8/21,22,24/00* | Minneapolis | It's OK to be Nervous | 48 |
| 11/17/00 | Minneapolis | Accessible Housing Conference | 71 |
| 01/18/01 | St. Paul | St. Paul Transition Information Night | 6 |
| 02/23/01 | Minneapolis | Ready to Manage Your Own Health Care? - MNATE conference | 21 |
| 02/26/01 | Minneapolis | Incorporating Health in the Transition Plan – MCEC/DCFL conference | 30 |
| 04/06/01 | Stout, WI | MN Ahead – preparing transition age youth for post secondary education | 10 |
| Total | | | 263 |

*Presentation was made on each day.

**Task Forces and Collaboratives**

The Project's staff are active in many state and community based collaborative. These activities include development of new self-determination wavered service program, multicultural standards review across educational, state, and local administrative levels, and involvement in state transition programs. In addition, ongoing collaborative efforts with St. Paul and surrounding area schools are taking place to ensure positive developments in meeting the health and transition issues of our youth. These efforts are taking place in the areas of youth development, parent leadership, and transition health.

Project Youth staff sit on 8 task forces and collaboratives. They are:
Youth Advisory Council
Home Care Task Force
CTIC monthly meetings
Children's Health Consortium meetings
St. Paul School nurses
Americorps – Disability Committee Meetings
SSI Benefits planning meeting
Boy Scouts – meeting to plan training for parents and leaders

### Information and Assistance

The issue of transition for children with disabilities is a very important one. PACER and the Project provided individual assistance 386 people who requested information about this topic. Project staff attended 17 IEP meetings with families between June 1, 2000 and May 31, 2001.

### Dissemination of Information

As a means of reaching youth, families, and professionals, information is disseminated through a variety of means. *Looking Ahead* is a project newsletter written for youth and their families. Topics focus on transition issues including health-related and employment topics. It is disseminated to families of youth with disabilities or chronic illness in the St. Paul Schools and by request. This newsletter was mailed three times during the year. The web is another means of information dissemination. Project Youth has a direct link at PACER's Web site's home page. Three web sections within PACER Center's Web site are related to Project Youth. These sites are *Project Youth, SSI*, and *Employment Strategies for Youth and Adults with Disabilities*. New posting are added to these sites on a regular basis. The sites received 15,416 visits.

### Resources materials

Project Youth provides written materials for both parents and professionals. This year 5 written materials were either revised or written and are available.

- *Ready to Manage Your Own Health Care?* (Revised 2001)
  This is a self-assessment questionnaire for adolescents covers the basic areas of health youth need to master in order to become self-sufficient adults.
- *Health Care Skills Tip Sheet* (2001 – for parents and case managers)
  This tip sheet gives furthers ideas and suggestions related to the topics in "Ready to Manage Your Own Health Care?" It provides ideas for making the self-assessment a teaching tool.
- *Health Care Skills Checklist and Interview Guide* (revised 2001 – for health professionals)
  This checklist provides a lay out with prompts to assist the school health nurse or related health professional in helping youth with the Ready to Manage Your Own Health Care assessment.
- *Transition Tips & Tools* (new updated version 2001)
  This resource book covers a wide range of transition issues from transition basics and planning to post-secondary education. Each section is designed as a handout related to a specific topic.
- *When I Grow Up . . . I'm Going To Work* (2001)
  This is two-part book for younger children and their parents. The first part is for elementary age children to see the wide range of work possibilities. This section includes photos of people with disabilities at work. Part two is for parents. This section gives ideas and resources for helping children prepare for and explore their future work possibilities.

## Conclusion

The goals of the Project are being met in a wide variety of manners. Fifteen workshops were presented to 271 parents, 53 youth and 193 professionals reaching 517 people. Seven presentations were made to 263 professionals about the project and Pediatric Resident Training was provided monthly for approximately 2 to 5 residents at a time. Project Youth provided individual assistance to 386 youth and families. Youth, their families and professionals have benefited through increased advocacy skills, the development of health skills, and overall increased understanding of transitions related issues.

# PACER's Health Information & Advocacy Center

PACER's Health Information and Advocacy Center was established June 1999 and has now completed it's second year. This program was designed as a central source of information and advocacy to help families navigate through health and insurance systems, and to provide information about how families and professionals can create positive and collaborative relationships together.

There are at least 15.3 million children in this country that have disabilities or chronic illness. According to an estimate from the Minnesota Children with Special Health Needs (MCSHN) organization, there are over 261,000 children with special health needs in Minnesota. This number represents children with health conditions which are virtually certain to last for at least one year which cause either 1) limitation in function, activity or social role or 2) dependency on medication, special diet, medical technology, assistive device or personal assistance to compensate for or minimize limitation of function or 3) the need for medical care or related services over and above the child's age. The health systems serving this population are constantly changing, and often these systems have little experience caring for children with complex conditions.

Families are the primary care providers for their children. Everyday families must make health decisions for their children with disabilities and chronic health conditions. These important decisions must be based on knowledge about the care of the child, as well as, knowledge about the health system. Families often receive inaccurate information from agencies and struggle with finding and obtaining services. In this era of rapidly changing healthcare and health financing systems, it is increasingly difficult and complicated for families to make informed decisions and find adequate resources.

**How the Focus of the Program Was Determined**

In a March 3, 2001 report from the National Academy of Sciences, (NAS), it was reported that, *"too many Americans get inadequate, outdated or even unsafe medical treatment because the nation's health care system is not patient-focused."* The NAS made specific recommendations in their report, among them: *"Patients should be given necessary information to make health care decisions. That means access to their own medical records, information about a doctor's or hospital's safety performance and access to scientific research."* PACER Center's Health Information and Advocacy Center was designed to address this issue. The Center's mission is to: Provide information, support and advocacy for families of children and youth with special health needs and disabilities; provide information and resources to professionals who work with families; and promote family-centered care and family/professional collaboration on all levels of health care and policy formation.

**Activities of Program**

The purpose of the Health Information and Advocacy Center is to provide a single point of access for information, advocacy and support for families of children and youth with special health needs on health care issues. These issues include assisting families in understanding:

- Health insurance coverage and contracts;
- The importance of keeping accurate medical records;
- How to make informed choices about health resources and providers;
- How to communicate with health providers;
- How to coordinate care;
- How to access information on general health resources such as Medical Assistance, and the Minnesota Children with Special Health Needs Program, and others.

**Individual Assistance**

From June 2000 to May 2001, the Health Center has served 765 families and professionals through individual assistance, resource dissemination, training, and professional collaboration.

The goal of individual contacts is to help families understand their rights and roles within the health care system. The Health Center has provided in-depth, individualized services to 146 families and professionals through individual one-on-one telephone calls.

**Workshops and Presentations**

One goal of the Health Center is to provide parents with information and resources about health care systems, public and private insurance, legal rights, and family centered care through workshops and presentations. The goal of the Health Center for professionals is to provide information and resources to assist them in working more effectively with families. The following workshop and presentations to families and professionals were made:

**Workshop for families:**

| Date | Location | Group | Parents |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06/03/00 | Minneapolis, MN | Immune Deficiency Foundation, MN | 20 |
| 09/23/00 | Minneapolis, MN | NICU Conference | 11 |
| 09/23/00 | Minneapolis, MN | Family Forum on Home Care | 50 |
| 10/07/00 | Minnetonka, MN | Spina Bifida Fall Conference | 20 |
| 03/08/01 | Fridley, MN | Medtronic Foundation, employee group | 25 |
| 03/15/01 | Minneapolis, MN | Advocacy in Health Care | 4 |
| 03/29/01 | Minneapolis, MN | Advocacy in Health Care | 5 |
| 05/22/01 | Minneapolis, MN | Advocacy in Health Care – PACER | 5 |
| Total | | | 140 |

**Presentations for Professionals:**

| Date | Location | Group | Prof. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06/12/00 | University of MN | Care Coordination for Children with Special Health Needs | 150 |
| 06/29/00 | Shriner's Hospital | Academy of Pediatrics, Medical Home Training | 150 |
| 03/06/01 | Inver Grove Heights | Paramedic Training, Family-Centered Care | 25 |
| 03/14/01 | Blue Cross/Blue Shield | Case Managers Meeting | 40 |
| 04/11/01 | Ramsey County | Ramsey County Early Childhood Information and Referral | 40 |
| 04/17/01 | Minneapolis | Pediatric Nurse Practioner Children with Special Health Needs Class | 10 |
| Total | | | 415 |

The staff of the Health Information and Advocacy Center met with first and second year pediatric residents from the University of Minnesota and Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare as part of the Parents as Teachers Program from June 2000 through May 2001. The staff met with 2 or 3 first year residents and 2 or 3 second year residents each month. Each month the total residents varied between 4 and 6. The total number of pediatric residents visited was approximately 60.

**Newsletter**

The Health Center developed *The Family Voices of Minnesota* newsletter. The first issue of the newsletter was mailed in April 2000. The second issue was mailed in August 2000 to 350 people. Articles about Health

Information and Advocacy Center appeared in the winter and spring issues of the *PACESETTER*, PACER's newsletter, reaching more than 80,000 people at each mailing.

**Public Information, Resources and Dissemination Activities**

The Health Center has developed and disseminated six fact sheets about legal rights in the health care system, including during the past year:

- *School Billing for IEP Services*
- *Prescription Coverage*
- *DME and Supplies*
- *Changes in Insurance Coverage (HIPAA and COBRA)*
- *Coverage of Therapies*
- *Self-Insured Appeals*

The following two fact sheets are currently being edited for dissemination:

- *School Health Records – Privacy and Access*
- *Keeping and Organizing Medical Records*

The following booklet has been developed and is currently being edited for dissemination in the 2001-2002:

- *Working Effectively With Doctors*

Additional information is available to families and professionals on the PACER Center Web site where the Health Information and Advocacy Center Web page is located. The Health Center Web page became available in October 2000 and has had 2,873 visits in its first eight months.

**Parent, Community and Professional Collaboration**

Health Information and Advocacy Center staff has participated on six advisory committees and boards that met 23 times in the past year. These were:

- In collaboration with the Department of Health Children with Special Health Needs program, conducted a statewide survey of parents regarding home care staffing shortages – met once.
- Collaborated with the Department of Health, Children with Special Health Needs program to provide support and training for the Parent Consultant program – met 4 times.
- Emergency Medical Services for Children resource Center of Minnesota, Advisory Committee – met 4 times.
- Minnesota Department of Health – Safe at Home Advisory Committee – met 12 times.
- The Center for Children with Special health Care Needs at The University of Minnesota Advisory Board – met once.
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Every Child Deserves a Medial Home Planning Committee and Conference – met once.

**Comments from Parents and Professionals**

A few of the comments that individuals have made to the staff of the project after their experiences of utilizing the resources of the Health Information and Advocacy Center have been:

- *"Helped me to realize the importance and benefits that a case manager can provide families of children with special needs"* Insurance Case Manager

- *"Provided great ways to look at how we as nurses can help our families. Very good presentation"* Insurance Case Manager

- *"I thought it was all great/ I have a disabled daughter who is now 24 years old and wish I could have heard your presentation then."* Parent

- *"...Our greatest challenge in raising Alex has been dealing with the medical issues which include problems with medical providers, the HMO's, equipment, supplies, home care agencies, negligent nurses, and now the employer self-insured health plan. Our struggles are constant and throughout the last 12 years of our daughter's life, there has been absolutely no resource for us as a family."* Parent

## Conclusion

The Health Information and Advocacy Center has just completed its second year serving families who have children with special health needs and disabilities, and far surpassed expectations about numbers of families and professionals served. HIAC provided individual assistance to 146 families and the goal was to provide individual assistance for 100 families. The Project participated on 6 policymaking committees that met 23 times and the goal was to participate on 2 to 3 committees and 415 professionals were trained at 6 workshops and the goal was to train 30 to 50 professionals. Articles about the Project were in 2 *PACESETTER* newsletters reaching more than 80,000 people at each mailing, and the HIAC developed The *Family Voices of Minnesota* newsletter that was mailed to more than 350 people. There were 2,873 visits to the HIAC link on the PACER Web site. The Center will continue to work on increasing outreach to families to provide information and resources about all aspects of the health care system, through individual advocacy and workshops. In addition, a focus on the needs of families who have children with special health needs and disabilities will continue as the project collaborates with community health professionals and programs.

# Minnesota Parent Center

The Minnesota Parent Center is a PACER Center project that serves families in **all** education settings. The project began in 1993. Currently the Minnesota Parent Center is in the second of a four year funding from the United States Department of Education as part of the Goals 2000: Parental Assistance Program. The project's primary goal continues to focus on the academic achievement of **all** children through increased family involvement in education.

The Minnesota Parent Center (MPC) educates all families and the general public about the importance of parental involvement and parent-professional partnerships in education. Project staff work directly with families, schools, and communities to provide information and training on a variety of educational related topics and individual assistance to families. The Minnesota Parent Center serves families in urban and rural areas throughout Minnesota. The project reaches families from diverse backgrounds including low-income families, families from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, immigrant families, and families with limited English proficiency and literacy through culturally appropriate outreach efforts and community collaborations. From June 1, 2000 – May 31, 2001 through all levels of individual assistance, the Minnesota Parent Center responded to 3,527 phone requests for information, training and advocacy services from both families and professionals. The project also presented 87 workshops, 20 in-services and 28 presentations reaching 2,927 parents, students, and professionals.

The Minnesota Parent Center supports families, schools, and communities in becoming more involved in the education of all children through four levels of interrelated services.

**Level 1 – Information, Training, and Individual Assistance**

Information training and individual assistance that includes telephone consultations, requests for written information, referrals, in-person consultation, and requests for workshops have been provided to 3,527 individuals this year. Of the 3,527 contacts, 1,670 (47%) were requests from families and 1,857 (53%) were requests from professionals. Areas of inquiry included: information regarding the Minnesota Parent Center's services, parenting skills, academic performance, suspension and expulsion, attendance and truancy, ADHD, discipline, strategies for parent involvement, graduation standards, and advocacy skills.

The Minnesota Parent Center conducted follow-up evaluations with 20 individuals randomly selected who received individual assistance. Not all of the individuals answered all of the questions.

1. How helpful was the information you received on the telephone?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very Helpful | 18 | 90% |
| Moderately Helpful | 2 | 10% |
| Slightly helpful | 0 | 0% |
| Not at all helpful | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

2. Did you feel more confident about your ability to work with the schools after receiving information from the Minnesota Parent Center staff?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 18 | 95% |
| No | 1 | 5% |
| Total | 19 | 100% |

3. Has the information you received enabled you to receive some of the help you needed for your child?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 17 | 85% |
| No | 3 | 15% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

4. Has the information you received enabled you to become more involved in your child's education?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 12 | 60% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| I am already involved | 8 | 40% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

5. Do you feel that you could have received the assistance you needed if the Minnesota Parent Center services had not been available?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 0 | 0% |
| No | 19 | 100% |
| Total | 19 | 100% |

Comments

- "I don't know where I would have gotten the information the Minnesota Parent Center gave me. Glad the MPC is around."
- "Good that MPC can advocate for people that don't have all the knowledge."

The Minnesota Parent Center continues to provide the following written material on topics of concern to parents. In an attempt to reach the racially diverse communities in Minnesota a number of these materials are available in Hmong and Spanish (*).

- *A Road Map for the Journey: Information to Gather*
- *A Road Map for the Journey: People to Know at My Child's School*
- *Activities that Help Your child Learn*
- *Adele Faber Parent Teacher Communication*
- *Communicating with Your Child's School**
- *Communication with Schools Can Help Hmong Parents Cope with Discipline Issues*
- *Connecting with Communities – Resource Guide for Southeast Asian and Hispanic Families*
- *Connecting, A Little Help Along the Way – Resource Guide for Parents of Students in Middle and High School*
- *Disciplining Young Children*
- *Employed Parents' Right to Attend School Activities*
- *Family Friendly Schools*
- *Focus on Discipline**
- *Gifted and Talented Students*
- *Graduation Standards*
- *Helping Your Child Succeed in School*
- *Homework Help*
- *How to Get the Most Out of Your TV*
- *How to Have a Better Relationship with Your Teen*
- *Ideas for Parent Involvement In Southeast Asian Communities*
- *Know Your Child's School*
- *Linking Parents on the World Wide Web*
- *Making the Most of Parent Teacher Meetings*
- *Parent Involvement Handout*
- *Parent Involvement is the Key**
- *Parent Teacher Conferences*
- *Parents From Varied cultures Can Communicate with Schools**
- *Preparing for the Transition to Middle and Senior High School*
- *Preparing Your Child for Kindergarten*

- *Record Keeping Folder**
- *School Starting*
- *Tale Credit for Learning*
- *Think Before Your Write*
- *Tips for Creating a Safe School*
- *Trouble at School*
- *Truancy**
- *Understanding Graduation Standards*
- *Understanding Report Cards*
- *Understanding the Graduation Standards Results*
- *What to do When Your Child is Being Bullied*
- *Where to Go with a Problem*
- *Winter Vacation Learning Enrichment Ideas*

**Workshops**

The goal of the Minnesota Parent Center has been to train families and professionals about family involvement, parent teacher partnerships, parenting skills, child development, effective communication techniques, and other topics of concern to parents and professionals. The Minnesota Parent Center staff conducted 59 workshops reaching 910 individuals. The following is a list of workshops presented.

| Date | Location | Group | Topic | Parent | Prof. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/15/00 | Shakopee | Early Childhood Center | Parent Involvement | 20 | 0 | 20 |
| 06/21/00 | Cloquet | Head Start | Kindergarten Readiness | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| 06/28/00 | Minneapolis | Parents Mpls. Urban League | Advocacy | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| 07/12/00 | Cloquet | Head Start Parents | School Readiness & Parent Involvement | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| 07/18/00 | Annandale | Cedar Hill Academy Parents & Students | Truancy | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| 07/20/00 | Annandale | Cedar Hill Academy Parents | Parent Involvement | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| 08/09/00 | New Hope | North West YMCA | Cultural Diversity – Part 1 | 0 | 12 | 12 |
| 08/11/00 | Anderson School South Minneapolis | Anderson Family Resource | Help Your Child Succeed in School | 22 | 4 | 26 |
| 08/21/00 | St. Louis Park | Perspectives Social Service/After School Tutoring Staff | FAS/E | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| 08/22/00 | Brian Coyle Center, Minneapolis | Confederation of Somali | Truancy | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| 08/23/00 | New Hope | North West YMCA | Cultural Diversity – Part 1 | 10 | 1 | 11 |
| 08/24/00 | Minneapolis Amer. Ind. Center | Golden Eagle Parents Group | Advocating | 21 | 0 | 21 |
| 08/28/00 | Koinonea Retreat Center in Annandale | Minneapolis Urban League Juvenile Advocacy Program | Help Your Child Succeed In school | 25 | 0 | 25 |
| 08/28/00 | Minneapolis | Simpson Transitional Housing | School Readiness | 11 | 0 | 11 |
| 08/30/00 | Crookston | Parent Group | Family Involvement | 75 | 0 | 75 |
| 09/11/00 | Duluth | Wash. Family Res Ctr | Help Your Child Succeed in School | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| 09/15/00 | St. Paul | Selected Parents, Eastside Neighborhood Merrick Comm Center | Help Your Child Succeed In School | 11 | 2 | 13 |
| 09/16/00 | Perham | Head Start Prof. | ADHD | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| 09/18/00 | St. Paul | Lexington Library | Advocating | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 09/18/00 | Brooklyn Park | Parents | Help Your Child Succeed In School | 5 | 0 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 09/19/00 | St. Paul | Selected Parents, Eastside Neighborhood Merrick Community Center | Help Your Child Succeed In School | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| 09/21/00 | Duluth | Parents, Lester Park Family Resource Center | Help Your Child Succeed In School | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| 09/21/00 | Minneapolis | Parent Group-Pathfinder | Family Involvement | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| 09/23/00 | Willmar | Parent Group | Family Involvement | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| 09/25/00 | Minneapolis | Parents, Hosmer Library | Help Your Child Succeed In School | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| 09/26/00 | Rosemount | Parents, Kindercare | Discipline | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| 10/11/00 | Merrick CC. St. Paul | Circle of Families | Helping Your Child Succeed in School | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| 10/11/00 | St. Paul | St. Paul Schools Action Teams | Creating Respectful Environments | 5 | 36 | 41 |
| 10/12/00 | Hopkins CC | Parents/ Hopkins Comm. Ed | Advocating for Your Child | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| 10/14/00 | Albuquerque | Council on Exceptional Children | Multi-cultural | 0 | 35 | 35 |
| 10/17/00 | Maplewood | Parents at Maplewood Shelter | Helping Your Child Succeed in School | 16 | 0 | 16 |
| 10/17/00 | Battle Cr. Elem | Parent Group | Homework Help | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| 10/24/00 | Lincoln Park School Duluth | Lincoln Park Advisory | Advocacy | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| 10/25/00 | Duluth | Low Income People (LIPOP) | Helping Your Child Succeed in School/Advocacy | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| 10/30/00 | Hosmer Library, Minneapolis | Parents | Advocacy | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| 01/05/01 | St. Louis Park | Parents | Advocacy | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| 01/11/01 | Fond du Lac | Fond Du Lac Head Start | Kindergarten Readiness/Reading | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| 01/11/01 | Duluth | Parents- St. John's | Advocacy | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| 01/13/01 | Minneapolis | Luxton Park Parents | Advocacy/Help your Child Succeed in School | 16 | 0 | 16 |
| 01/23/01 | Hopkins | Parents PTA | Working w/Diverse Pop | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| 02/13/01 | Merrick CC St. Paul | Merrick CC School Stability | Discipline | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| 02/15/01 | North End Elementary St. Paul | Parent group | ADHD | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| 02/22/01 | North End Elementary, St. Paul | Educators | ADHD | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| 02/22/01 | Fairmont | Parents | Advocacy | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| 02/24/01 | Minneapolis | MN Council G&T | Advocacy for G&T students | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| 02/27/01 | Merrick CC St. Paul | Merrick CC School Stability | Help Your Child Succeed | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| 03/03/01 | Duluth | Get Ready Parent Group | Advocating | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| 03/08/01 | S. St. Paul High School | St Paul Comm Action Council | ADHD | 40 | 13 | 53 |
| 03/15/01 | Cloquet | Fond Du Lac Head Start | Kindergarten Readiness | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| 03/19/01 | Minneapolis | Simpson Housing Parents | Ed Issues/Partnerships | 12 | 1 | 13 |
| 03/20/01 | Mound | Hilltop PTA | Discipline | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| 03/26/01 | Minneapolis | Simpson-Trans. Housing | Summer Resources/Activities | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| 04/17/01 | PACER | Dr. Mary Montle Bacon | Empowering Families | 24 | 45 | 69 |
| 04/18/01 | PACER | Dr. Mary Montle Bacon | Families as Partners | 23 | 50 | 73 |
| 04/21/01 | MCTC, Minneapolis | AAAL Conference Parents & Professionals | Urban Framework/Parent-Teacher Partnerships | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| 04/21/01 | MCTC, Minneapolis | AAAL Conference Parents & Professionals | Urban Framework/Parent-Teacher Partnerships | 2 | 10 | 12 |
| 05/08/01 | NE Middle | NE Parent's Site Council | PACER/MPC/Summer Enrich | 12 | 2 | 14 |
| 05/15/01 | Crossroads Elem. | Crossroads ECFE | Advocating | 12 | 1 | 13 |
| 05/24/01 | Webster St. Paul | Webster Site Council | PACER/MPC/Truancy | 14 | 2 | 16 |
| Total | | | | 652 | 258 | 910 |

The Minnesota Parent Center conducted follow-up phone evaluations with twenty individuals randomly selected who attended Level I workshops. Not all parents answered all of the questions.

1. Was any of the information presented at the workshop useful to you?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 20 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

2. Did you feel more confident in your ability to work with the schools because of the information or support you received from Minnesota Parent Center?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 19 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 19 | 100% |

3. Have you been more involved in your child's education or school since you attended the Minnesota Parent Center workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 69% |
| No | 1 | 6% |
| I am already involved | 4 | 25% |
| Total | 16 | 100% |

4. School level of students: (more than one student involved)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Preschool | 6 | 26% |
| Elementary | 10 | 43% |
| Jr /Middle School | 2 | 9% |
| Senior high | 5 | 22% |
| Total | 23 | 100% |

Comments:

- "Enjoyed the diverse audience from different ethnic backgrounds. The information from the audience was very enlightening."
- "I did not realize all the resources the schools had. The Minnesota Parent Center brought this out."
- "There is a need for more workshops."

Follow-up written evaluations were sent to 37 individuals randomly selected who attended one of the basic workshops. Eleven evaluations were returned (30%). Not all of the questions were answered.

1. Did the workshop provide you with additional information about the topic?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 11 | 100% |

2. After you attended the workshop did you learn additional ways to communicate with school professionals?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 11 | 100% |

3. Do feel more confident when you communicate with school professionals?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 10 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 10 | 100% |

4. Did you feel more confident in your ability to advocate for your child?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 11 | 100% |

5. Written Materials: Were the handouts useful to you?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 11 | 100% |

6. Did the written materials help give you more information about the topic of the workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 11 | 100% |

7. Give you additional information about how to be involved in your child's education?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 11 | 100% |

8. How to communicate with the staff at your child's school?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 11 | 100% |

9. How to help your child learn at home and at school?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 11 | 100% |

**HIPPY Project**

The Minnesota Parent Center collaborates with the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) located in the Philips Neighborhood of Minneapolis. The goal of the HIPPY Project is to give economically disadvantaged families of preschoolers the curriculum, materials and skills, and support to teach and prepare their children for school success.

HIPPY has also been successful in developing collaboration with the following community based organizations serving families: Healthy Families, the Upper Midwest American Indian Center, Southside Family Nurturing, Anderson Resource Center, Casa Esperanza, and Chicanos Latinos Unidos en Servicios (CLUES).

From September 2000 through May 2001, HIPPY staff provided training and services to 30 families who were at or below poverty level. The age distribution of the 35 children were: 10 three year olds, 14 four year olds and 11 five year old children.

The cultural, ethnic, racial orientation of the families were:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| African American | 15 | 43% |
| Latin American | 1 | 3% |
| American Indian | 4 | 11% |
| European American | 15 | 43% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

**Level II – Information, Training, and Individual Assistance To Underrepresented Families**

Minnesota Parent Center project goals include:

- Providing individual assistance to 300 parents through phone, mail, and individual consultation.
- Providing 6-8 workshops for 100-200 parents and professionals in the African American, Hmong, Native American, and Latino/Hispanic cultural groups.
- Presenting 1-2 workshops regarding the cultural influences on parent/professional communication and parent involvement for 50-100 teachers and administrators.
- Providing Minnesota Parent Center materials in Hmong and Spanish.

Minnesota Parent Center staff provided assistance to 375 individuals requesting services for multicultural issues and concerns through phone consultation, site visits, and written materials.

The Minnesota Parent Center conducted follow-up telephone evaluations with 20 individuals randomly selected that received individual assistance. Not all questions were answered.

1. How helpful was the information you received on the telephone?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very Helpful | 11 | 58% |
| Moderately Helpful | 5 | 26% |
| Slightly helpful | 1 | 5% |
| Not at all helpful | 2 | 11% |
| Total | 19 | 100% |

2. Did you feel more confident in your ability to work with the schools after receiving information from the Minnesota Parent Center staff?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 13 | 81% |
| No | 3 | 19% |
| Total | 16 | 100% |

3. Has the information you received enabled you to receive some of the help you needed for your child?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 10 | 77% |
| No | 3 | 23% |
| Total | 13 | 100% |

4. Has the information you received enabled you to become more involved in your child's education?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 9 | 53% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| I am already involved | 8 | 47% |
| Total | 17 | 100% |

5. Do you feel that you could have received the assistance you needed if the Minnesota Parent Center services had not been available?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 3 | 16% |
| No | 16 | 84% |
| Total | 19 | 100% |

Comments:

- "Did a wonderful job!"
- "Both advocates are on it!!"
- "Staff member was wonderful, please clone her!

**Workshops**

The Minnesota Parent Center conducted 13 workshops for 221 parents and professionals from African American, Hmong, Native American, and Latino/Hispanic racial and cultural groups.

| Date | Location | Group | Topic | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10/13/00 | Red Lake Reservation | Head Start Staff | FAS/E | 28 |
| 10/18/00 | Hancock School | Hmong PTA | Family Involvement | 8 |
| 11/01/00 | Crossroads, St. Paul | Native Amer. ECFE group | Advocating | 15 |
| 11/11/00 | Anderson Open, Minneapolis | A.A. parent group (CRR) | Truancy | 32 |
| 12/19/00 | Minneapolis | Pathfinder | Family Involvement | 6 |
| 01/13/01 | Anderson Open, Minneapolis | AA parent group. (CRR) | Grad Standards | 11 |
| 01/22/01 | Highwood Hills Rec Center | Somali parents | Help your Child Succeed | 7 |
| 01/22/01 | St. Paul | Lao Family Comm. Org Staff | MPC and Family Involvement | 9 |
| 02/06/01 | St. Paul | Hmong Parents | Help your Child Succeed | 7 |
| 02/09/01 | St. Paul | Hmong Parents | Family Involvement is the Key | 39 |
| 02/06/01 | Shakopee | Pierson Elementary | Family Involvement | 11 |
| 04/26/01 | Fond du Lac Tribal College | Title IX Conference | Advocating | 8 |
| 05/18/01 | Museum Magnet St. Paul | Title I Parent Group | Summer Learning Activities | 40 |
| Total | | | | 221 |

The Minnesota Parent Center conducted follow-up phone evaluations with twenty individuals randomly selected that attended Level II workshops. Not all of the questions were answered.

1. Was any of the information presented at the workshop useful to you?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 16 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 16 | 100% |

2. Did you feel more confident in your ability to work with the schools because of the information or support you received from Minnesota Parent Center staff?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 17 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 17 | 100% |

3. Have you been more involved in your child's education or school since you attended the Minnesota Parent Center workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 8 | 42% |
| No | 2 | 11% |
| I am already involved | 9 | 47% |
| Total | 19 | 100% |

4. School level:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Preschool | 4 | 13.3% |
| Elementary | 12 | 40% |
| Middle School | 10 | 33.3% |
| Senior high | 4 | 13.3% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

* More than one answer may have been given.

Comments:

- "New ideas, lots of info"
- "Parents can be empowered. Mom can be there for her child."
- "After going to the workshop, I talked to my older children about the importance of finishing their education. They went back to school!"

The Minnesota Parent Center conducted 5 workshops for 102 parents and professionals regarding the cultural influences on parent/professional communication and parent involvement.

| Date | Location | Group | Topic | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/08/00 | Southeast Asian Comm. Council | MELD Advisory Bd. Mtg. | Family Involvement | 12 |
| 06/15/00 | St. Paul | St. Paul Public School, English Language Learners | Family Involvement | 4 |
| 07/01/00 | Minneapolis | Lao Parents, Lao National Education Conference | Family involvement | 14 |
| 08/07/00 | Marshall, MN | Head Start professional | Cultural Diversity | 27 |
| 02/22/01 | Chaska | Family Ed Network | Family Involvement/Multi-cultural | 45 |
| Total | | | | 102 |

The Minnesota Parent Center conducted follow-up written evaluations with four individuals randomly selected who attended the cultural influence on parent/professional communication and involvement.

1. Did you learn more about cultural diversity?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 3 | 75% |
| No | 1 | 25% |
| Total | 4 | 100% |

2. Did you acquire additional knowledge about some of the culturally diverse populations that attend your school?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 3 | 75% |
| No | 1 | 25% |
| Total | 4 | 100% |

3. Did the workshop increase your awareness of some of the barriers that racially and ethnically diverse parents or family members encounter when attempting to participate in their child's education?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 3 | 75% |
| No | 1 | 25% |
| Total | 4 | 100% |

4. Did you learn additional ways to communicate with culturally diverse parents?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 2 | 50% |
| No | 2 | 50% |
| Total | 4 | 100% |

5. Were the handouts useful to you?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 3 | 75% |
| No | 1 | 25% |
| Total | 4 | 100% |

6. How can we improve this workshop?
   - "Have more of them."
   - "Bring families to the table so they can directly share their experiences and how these have affected their children's education."

**Level III – Training of Regional Trainers and Community Partners**

The Minnesota Parent Center has trained 38 parents and community members statewide as Community Resource Representatives (CRR). The number of individuals trained exceeded the project goal of training 20 individuals. The CRR's have become a network of well-informed parents who help support the concept of family involvement in education and support other parents to be advocates for their children.

**Level IV – Public Information, Resources, Dissemination Activities, and Collaboration**

As part of its goals, the Minnesota Parent Project will provide information about the importance of parent involvement in education statewide to 300,000 parents, professionals, businesses and others using a variety of techniques. Special effort is to be made to reach low income and culturally diverse communities. The project will give presentations reaching 400 people.

Using a variety of techniques the Minnesota Parent Center has provided information about the importance of family involvement in education reaching an estimated 1,700,000 individuals surpassing its stated goals. Information regarding the Minnesota Parent Center has appeared in many newspapers, flyers and through literature handouts. A few of the major publications that have had articles about the Project appeared in the *Star Tribune*, circulation 673,000, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, circulation 212,000, along with regional and community newspapers. Articles about the Project have appeared in the *PACESETTER*, circulation 83,000, PACER Center's newsletter along with program information mailed to the 4,500 people on the Minnesota Parent Center's mail list. Staff has appeared cable and public television information about family involvement.

The Minnesota Parent Center translated the following materials:

- *Graduation Standards Handouts – Spanish*
- *Truancy brochure – Hmong, Spanish*
- *Discipline article – Hmong*
- *Parent Involvement – Hmong*
- *Communication article – Hmong*
- *Truancy – Hmong and Spanish*

**Presentations**

The Minnesota Parent Center has conducted 28 presentations to 561 individuals informing them about the services offered by the Minnesota Parent Center, the need for involved family members and collaboration activities.

| Date | Group | Topic | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06/12/00 | Minneapolis Public Schools Southside Networking | PACER/MPC | 17 |
| 07/12/00 | Memorial Family Resource Center | PACER/MPC | 3 |
| 07/12/00 | Various speakers who attended the Head Start activity in Cloquet | PACER/MPC | 5 |
| 07/19/00 | 348-TOTS @ Century Plaza Minneapolis | PACER/MPC | 10 |
| 07/27/00 | South Area Agency Taskforce | PACER/MPC | 8 |
| 08/05/00 | Holy Rosary Catholic Church | PACER/MPC | 50 |
| 08/15/00 | Way to Grow | PACER/MPC | 26 |
| 08/30/00 | St. Louis County Social Services | PACER/MPC | 12 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09/22/00 | Low Income People Organizing for Power Duluth | PACER/MPC | 4 |
| 09/21/00 | ELL Advisory Group | Family Involvement | 9 |
| 10/02/00 | Harrison Neighborhood Association | MPC Overview | 10 |
| 10/12/00 | South Side Area Principals/Minneapolis | MPC/PACER | 15 |
| 10/13/00 | Red Lake Reservation | MPC Overview | 28 |
| 10/25/00 | Staff St. John's School Duluth | MPC/PACER | 10 |
| 12/07/00 | Anwatin- Site Council | MPC/Parent Survey | 11 |
| 12/15/00 | Council of Churches – Parent group | MPC Overview | 32 |
| 12/27/00 | Univ. of St. Thomas – School of Social Work | MPC Overview | 18 |
| 01/11/01 | Lauj Youth Society Organization | MPC | 100 |
| 01/18/01 | South Area Network | MPC Resource Book | 20 |
| 02/16/01 | Hilltop Elementary Staff | PACER-MPC | 4 |
| 02/21/01 | NIT Charter School | PACER-MPC | 2 |
| 03/01/01 | South Area Network Agencies | PACER-MPC | 22 |
| 03/07/01 | PACT4/Willmar | PACER/MPC | 29 |
| 03/26/01 | Robbinsdale School District staff | MPC Overview | 19 |
| 03/29/01 | South Arc Network Agencies | MPC Conference | 30 |
| 04/21/01 | AAAL Conf Parents and Prof | MPC/PACER | 25 |
| 05/18/01 | Parent Leadership | MPC Overview | 36 |
| 05/10/01 | Storefront Group, Richfield MN | MPC Overview | 6 |
| Total | | | 561 |

The Minnesota Parent Center continues to partner with the University of Minnesota, Center for School Change to develop and present conferences regarding the importance of family involvement in education. During 2000-2001 the Minnesota Parent Center and the Center for School Change presented ten workshops around the state attended by 818 individuals.

| Date | Conference | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 09/12/00 | Open House/Event North Shore Elementary non-traditional ways to get involved & assist students | 143 |
| 09/26/00 | Parent Involvement Workshop Perham High School | 22 |
| 10/11,10/26 & 11/06/00 | Miltona Science Magnet School – 3 separate events to help parents work with children in the following curriculum areas: family math, science and the United States | 287 |
| 10/17/00 | Itasca CC- Grand Rapids partners Raising Non-Violent Children In a Violent World | 76 |
| 10/26/00 | Brainerd Area – Family Forum – Enhancing Children's Creativity through story telling and reading | 70 |
| 10/26/00 | Sojourner Truth School, Minneapolis – improving student achievement | 87 |
| 11/06/00 | Brainerd Mississippi Horizons School – series of workshops-various topics | 57 |
| 11/21/00 | Cambridge Isanti SD – assistance to parent committees | 76 |
| Total | | 818 |

## Pre-services and In-services

The Minnesota Parent Center staff has presented the 20 pre-services and in-services to 315 professionals.

| Date | Location | Group | Topic | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/20/00 | Hubb Center St. Paul | Minneapolis/St. Paul teachers | Working with Diverse Pop | 17 |
| 07/05/00 | Hubb Center St. Paul | Urban Learners | Parent teacher partnerships | 43 |
| 07/26/00 | St. Louis Park | Perspectives | MPC overview | 12 |
| 07/14/00 | Minneapolis | Cedar Hill Staff | Parent teacher partnerships | 15 |
| 08/03/00 | Hubert Humphrey Center | U of MN Summer Institute | Barriers working with families & partnerships | 19 |
| 08/24/00 | South Minneapolis | Head Start staff | How to Advocate for Families | 22 |
| 08/24/00 | South Minneapolis | Head Start | How to Advocate for Families | 16 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 08/24/00 | Minneapolis | Head Start | How to Advocate for Families | 14 |
| 10/16/00 | St. Paul Central High School | St. Paul teachers | Parent/Teacher Partnership | 5 |
| 11/06/00 | Hopkins Community Center | Hopkins teachers | Parent/Teacher Partnership | 17 |
| 11/06/00 | Hopkins Community Center | Hopkins teachers | Parent/Teacher Partnership | 16 |
| 12/04/00 | Macalester College | Inver Grove CC | Parent/Teacher Partnership | 6 |
| 01/11/01 | Minneapolis | Latino Service Providers | Family Involvement | 45 |
| 01/17/01 | Luxton Park, CC Minneapolis | Luxton Staff | Advocacy/Resources | 8 |
| 01/19/01 | Luxton Park, CC Minneapolis | Luxton Staff | Advocacy | 10 |
| 01/24/01 | Luxton Park, CC Mpls | Luxton Staff | Parent Involvement | 7 |
| 01/29/01 | Minneapolis | Special Ed Staff | Parent Involvement | 15 |
| 01/31/01 | Luxton Park, CC Minneapolis | Luxton Staff | Leadership Roles | 8 |
| 02/14/01 | St. Louis Park | Perspectives Family Center | ADHD | 10 |
| 02/07/01 | Minneapolis | Cedar Hill Academy | Family Involvement | 10 |
| Total | | | | 315 |

During 2000-2001 Minnesota Parent Center staff have participated on the following task forces and policy committees:

Afro-American Academy for Accelerated Learning
Community Needs Assessment - Perspectives Family Center
Desegregation Advisory Diversity Panel-Robbinsdale
English Language Learners Advisory Meeting
Hmong Community Educational Dialog meeting
MELD Advisory
Minneapolis Gifted and Talented Advisory Comm.
Minority Partnership for Education
MN Association of Charter Schools Advisory Board
MN Dept. Of Health/Teen Pregnancy Prevention
MPLS Public Schools Southside Networking Group
PACER Computer Center Outreach Planning
PIRC Conference Planning Committee
Public Awareness & Mobilization action Group
South Area Network Meeting
Stand For Children
Success By Six Advisory Board
Truancy Task Force
Twin Cities Public TV Focus Group
White Earth Tribal Council

## Conclusion

The Minnesota Parent Center is a valuable program that continues to address the need for building relationships between families, schools, and communities to better enhance children's social, emotional, and academic growth. This project will continue to provide information, support and assistance, and training to further family involvement in education. Minnesota Parent Center provided individual assistance for 3,527 people and conducted 59 workshops for 910 individuals. MPC provided individual assistance to 375 people in the African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American and Southeast Asian communities. In addition 13 workshops for 221 parents and professionals were done for racial and cultural groups. Minnesota Parent Center staff made twenty-eight presentations to 561 individuals about the MPC and the need for involved family members and collaboration activities. An additional 20 pre-services and in-services were held for 315 professionals.

# Web Site

## www.pacer.org

PACER has been successful in providing outreach, information, and guidance to those seeking information on disabilities issues and assistance for children with disabilities. From June 1, 2000 to May 31, 2001, PACER Center estimates over 237,400 individuals, (almost 17,600 were repeat visitors), from the US and over 80 countries have visited the PACER Web site. This represents a 40% increase over the same period from last year.

| Month | Visits |
|---|---|
| 06/00 | 19,976 |
| 07/00 | 19,739 |
| 08/00 | 17,624 |
| 09/00 | 18,096 |
| 10/00 | 20,670 |
| 11/00 | 22,575 |
| 12/00 | 15,583 |
| 01/01 | 21,568 |
| 02/01 | 22,688 |
| 03/01 | 19,514 |
| 04/01 | 19,756 |
| 05/01 | 19,702 |
| Total | 237,491 |

PACER regularly receives requests to reprint the materials available on the site. Currently, PACER holds over 600 on-line documents (plus another 600 in text-only format) on its main Web site (**www.pacer.org**), 390 on-line documents on its Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers Web site (**www.taalliance.org**), and over 270 on-line documents on its Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE) Web site (**www.fape.org**). Documents on these sites include articles, newsletters, legislative alerts and updates, resource lists, and the project descriptions.

PACER's Web page was redesigned with a professional look and more comfortable navigation.

### Accessibility

PACER is committed to maintaining an accessible web site. To accommodate people who use adaptive technology, older equipment, or who have limited access to a computer PACER has provided a text-only version of every page in addition to the graphics-enhanced version. All of the PACER Web sites meet BOBBY-approved standards set by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) and accessibility standards set forth by the World Wide Web Consortium.

### Summary of Grant Activities for 2000-2001

1. **Minnesota and Federal Legislative Information (Using private funds only)**

   PACER has expanded its coverage of IDEA by making primary sources of legislation and rulings available in several different formats. PACER also tracked more state-level bills and legislative information this year, providing Minnesota parents of children with disabilities more information about legislation affecting them. PACER's legislative updates, on both federal and state levels, provide current information for advocates and parents of children with disabilities. Parents and professionals may also sign up through the PACER Web site to receive legislative information via e-mail.

*Your website is wonderful!!!! The Section 504 Manual is extremely helpful with Section 504 becoming a "hot topic" lately, even though it's been around since the 70's.*

-A parent

*You have a great website. It is very clean and well organized, and comprehensive. It certainly fills a need that I see in my practice. I will be referring many of my patients to your site.*

-A psychologist, Ph.D

*LOOKS GREAT! You've done an amazing job. It's easy to navigate and it looks 200% better than the original. CONGRATS!!!*

-A parent, Minnesota

2. **On-line database on the Alliance Web site**

In January 2000, PACER launched an upgraded version of the on-line database to its Alliance Web site. The database is to serve as a central resource for parents, professionals, and advocates. The material will consist of technical assistance resources, parent center materials, and translated materials.

3. **Alternative Formats**

PACER continues to provide a text-only version of each page on its Web site as well as providing primary documents in formats useable with PCs and Macs. Visitors can download these documents from the PACER site and save them on their computers for later use.

4. **New Legislation Page**

PACER redesigned its legislation page for easier searching of the important bills users are looking for. Action alerts are posted at the top of the page for users to read.

5. **Project Expansion**

As the Web becomes more and more a resource for parents, projects within PACER have continued to meet the need for information by offering more publications, which can be downloaded. The list of links to other resources had continued to expand.

*Your web site is great! The information is very easy to find and your response time to my questions is so fast. I appreciate all of your efforts to help parents like me.*

-A parent, Atlanta, GA

*I was able to find so much information for my research paper this year from your Web site and brochures. I never knew that there was such a wonderful resource on disabilities.*

-A student

6. **Translated Materials**

PACER continues to post material on the PACER and FAPE Web sites in Spanish and Hmong. The TATRA Web site (**www.pacer.org/tatra/tatra.htm**) established an impressive list of transition material in Spanish.

**Future Plans**

PACER Center would like to continue to develop and expand its Web site to serve Minnesota families more effectively. Following are some of the ideas:

- PACER will continue to add articles, laws, rules, and other resources to its growing World Wide Web library. PACER will also continue to update its resource directories, events listings, Web link pages and

publications list. PACER is looking into making more of its own handouts and pamphlets accessible through the Web site.

- PACER will continue provide materials in Hmong and Spanish on its Web site. PACER will also expand its search for special education resources and Web sites available in languages other than English.
- PACER will provide a directory of staff and their projects so visitors can better direct their questions.
- PACER will continue to improve its on-line database, located on the Alliance Web site. PACER aims to achieve a rate of 20 new entries a month into the database. This will ensure its ability to serve as a central resource for parents, professionals, and advocates.
- PACER Center currently lists on its Web site the publications it has for sale. This catalog does not yet have the capability to accept on-line credit card purchases, but publication requests can be printed and mailed in.
- PACER seeks to expand its on-line catalogs to include its Software Lending Library from the Computer Resource Center.

## Conclusion

PACER Center has far exceeded the expectations for the three Web sites it monitors.

| Web site | Hits | Visits |
|---|---|---|
| PACER Center – **(www.pacer.org)** | 3,500,000 | 237,400 |
| Alliance – **(www.taalliance.org)** | 354,100 | 92,100 |
| FAPE – **(www.fape.org)** | 607,400 | 112,600 |
| Total | 4,461,500 | 442,100 |

With the Web site's new design, it has allowed families and professionals to access information on a wide range of topics quickly and easily. It has also provided an alternative method to people to contact PACER Center. The positive feedback that PACER has received indicates that it has successfully served families and professionals locally, nationally, and internationally.

# COUNT ME IN
## PACER's Program on Disability Awareness

COUNT ME IN, a project of PACER Center, trains volunteers to provide educational programs to preschool and elementary students about people with disabilities and to dispel myths and fears children and adults have regarding disabilities. COUNT ME IN began in June 1979 with a grant from the Department of Personnel Preparation, U.S. Office of Special Education. Since 1984, the project has continued through a combination of small grants from corporations, foundations, contributions from individuals and fees.

The COUNT ME IN program was initiated in response to the concern by PACER's Board of Directors and parents that children without disabilities need to become more knowledgeable about disabilities and more accepting of their peers who have disabilities. PACER felt that a program was needed to help educate children and to assist schools in their efforts to implement programs of inclusion and integration in the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities.

PACER Center has involved more than 279,000 individuals in disability awareness since the COUNT ME IN program was introduced. During 2000-2001:

- Approximately 165 individuals attended 4 informational presentations.
- 47 people participated in 7 volunteer trainings.
- 12,156 students and 950 teachers and adults saw 171 COUNT ME IN shows in elementary and preschool presentations. This also includes:
  - 2,121 children and 200 adults saw 38 pre/K puppet shows.
  - 4 evening and weekend puppet shows were presented to 289 children and 61 adults.
- 143 people contacted PACER for COUNT ME IN disability awareness program ideas, sales information, COUNT ME IN Resource Manual, and tote rental that is filled with aids and appliances that a person with disabilities might use.

**Public Information**

The COUNT ME IN project's two main goals through its public information efforts are to inform the public of the needs and capabilities of individuals who have disabilities, and to distribute information about the COUNT ME IN project.

During 2000-2001 PACER completed several public information programs for its COUNT ME IN project.

- Nine articles about COUNT ME IN appeared in local, state, and national publications during 2000-2001 with circulation exceeding 63,500 people.
- PACER puppets were highlighted on KARE TV, Channel 11, on their 10 p.m. *Weather Garden* segment of the evening news that has a potential viewing audience of 2.5 million people.

**Volunteer training workshops**
**Training of trainers and replication**

During 2000-2001, COUNT ME IN held seven volunteer training sessions attended by forty-seven people. Volunteers receive training to present information on disabling conditions to students. Three of the trainings were held at PACER Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The other trainings were conducted in communities in Minnesota who own the puppets; this included Hastings, Woodbury, and two trainings in Forest Lake.

The one-day training session for volunteers includes information on disabilities, feelings of people with disabilities, aids and appliances, resources for persons with disabilities, suggestions on ways to respond to questions that students most commonly ask regarding disabilities, techniques of puppetry, and information on Public Law 94-142 and Public Law 101-476, with emphasis on the rights of children with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment.

The participants represented a variety of backgrounds and had a range of understanding about disabilities. At the conclusion of each of the trainings, participants were asked to complete an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the overall training. Forty-seven individuals attended the trainings and 46 (98%) completed the surveys. The following questions were asked:

1. How much do you feel this training has increased or expanded your positive attitudes about persons with disabilities?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very | 30 | 65% |
| Moderately | 16 | 35% |
| Slightly | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 46 | 100% |

2. From the information you received at this training, how comfortable do you feel about encouraging positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very | 39 | 85% |
| Moderately | 7 | 15% |
| Slightly | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 46 | 100% |

3. How sufficient was the information you received at the training for answering basic questions about disabilities?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very | 35 | 76% |
| Moderately | 11 | 24 % |
| Slightly | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 46 | 100% |

4. How comfortable do you feel about answering children's questions and concerns about disabilities?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very | 24 | 52% |
| Moderately | 18 | 39% |
| Slightly | 4 | 9% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 46 | 100% |

5. How well informed do you feel about puppetry techniques?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very | 26 | 57% |
| Moderately | 18 | 39% |
| Slightly | 2 | 4% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 46 | 100% |

6. How well informed do you feel about giving presentations to schoolchildren?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very | 29 | 63% |
| Moderately | 15 | 33% |
| Slightly | 2 | 4% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 46 | 100% |

7. How would you rate the overall training?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 41 | 89% |
| Good | 5 | 11% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 46 | 100% |

8. What was most helpful for you?

- "Watching the performance was key to my overall understanding of how to engage my audience in the show and how to depict the various disabilities through the puppets."
- "The hands on training we were given."
- "One on one with trainers and puppets."
- "I was made to feel very comfortable and given confidence by the trainers."

**Conclusions - Volunteer Training**

COUNT ME IN training programs for volunteers in Minnesota during 2000-2001 were rated as excellent or good by 100% of the respondents. One hundred percent of the participants felt the training made them more comfortable with encouraging others to form more positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Following the training and team practices, two follow-up sessions are provided to help increase the confidence level and puppetry skill of the volunteers before they present their first show.

**Replication**

Replication of the program enables more students and teachers to be reached with important information about people with disabilities. This year 35 volunteers were trained at four replication trainings.

| Date | Location | Volunteers |
|---|---|---|
| 07/11/00 | Forest Lake, MN | 11 |
| 10/30/00 | Hastings, MN | 6 |
| 12/22/00 | Woodbury, MN | 13 |
| 04/06/01 | Forest Lake, MN | 5 |
| Total | | 35 |

The training includes background information on disabilities and puppetry techniques as well as sessions for organizing a presentation about disabilities for children. Each community receives the *COUNT ME IN*

*Resource Manual on Disabilities* that contains references to many books, films and other resources available on this topic. The coordinator in each community receives the *COUNT ME IN Coordinator's Handbook* that contains organizational suggestions, sample forms and publicity information that is useful in setting up a successful disability awareness project. The aids and appliances for children with disabilities are displayed and discussed in the course of the training.

### Program Development

The COUNT ME IN project continues to update scripts to keep the program current with the communities needs. Brochure and sales packet were updated and additional information posted on the PACER Web site. Puppets continue to be sold to communities throughout the country. Fifty-one requests were responded to in regards to puppet sales. A majority of the requests for puppet sales information this year have been received via email. Twelve COUNT ME IN puppets were sold during 2000-2001 year.

## Puppet Program Presentations

COUNT ME IN volunteers and staff presented 171 puppet programs about students with disabilities to children between June 1, 2000 and May 31, 2001. The programs reached 12,156 children and 950 teachers and other adults.

The content and information of the puppet programs have been adapted for two audiences of different ages. A 45-minute program is presented to children in preschool and kindergarten (ages 4-6) and includes scripts on blindness, deafness and spina bifida. A one-hour program is presented to children in elementary schools (Grades 1–4) and includes more sophisticated scripts on blindness and deafness, as well as more abstract scripts focusing on physical disabilities (cerebral palsy) and hidden disabilities (mental retardation). PACER has also developed scripts on epilepsy, learning disabilities, ADHD, autism, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, muscular dystrophy and diabetes. Each disability is discussed in a 7 to 10 minute skit that usually involved 2-3 puppets.

In the elementary school shows, programs are presented to an audience of up to 100 children (3-4 classrooms), which permits personal interaction of students with the puppets. Approximately 10 minutes is reserved to display and discuss some aids and appliances that assist persons with disabilities to be independent

At the conclusion of the puppet show, children are each given an information letter about COUNT ME IN to take home to their families. Teachers receive a packet of materials for their classroom which includes the Manual Sign Letter Alphabet, and the COUNT ME IN program, the COUNT ME IN song (music and sign), table of contents for the Resource Manual and an evaluation form. Each school receives information on PACER Center's programs and services.

### Teacher-Adult Evaluations

To determine the effectiveness of the COUNT ME IN program, PACER developed an evaluation form for the adults to complete after seeing the program. Evaluations were completed by 587 of the 950 (62%) adults who saw the programs in 2000-2001. A summary of the evaluation follows. Not all questions were answered by the respondents.

1. How would you rate the COUNT ME IN presentation?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 445 | 76 % |
| Very good | 140 | 24% |
| Fair | 2 | <1 % |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 587 | 100% |

2. Did the information on disabilities seem appropriate for the age of your children?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very appropriate | 489 | 84% |
| Appropriate | 87 | 15% |
| Slightly Appropriate | 4 | 1% |
| Not | 1 | <1% |
| Total | 581 | 100% |

3. How informative do you believe the show was for your students?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very informative | 468 | 80% |
| Informative | 104 | 18% |
| Slightly | 9 | 2% |
| Not | 1 | <1% |
| Total | 582 | 100% |

4. Do you believe the COUNT ME IN show will help improve attitudes that children in your classroom may have toward children with disabilities?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A great deal | 426 | 73% |
| Moderately | 146 | 25% |
| Slightly | 8 | 2% |
| Not | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 580 | 100% |

5. Was the program the right length of time for your children?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 509 | 93% |
| No, too long | 38 | 7% |
| Total | 547 | 100% |

6. Following the COUNT ME IN presentation, I now feel:

(a) more comfortable helping a student with a disability fit into my class.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 190 | 40% |
| Agree | 272 | 57% |
| Disagree | 14 | 3% |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 476 | 100% |

(b) more comfortable helping students without disabilities understand disabilities.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 237 | 49% |
| Agree | 239 | 50% |
| Disagree | 3 | 1% |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 479 | 100% |

(c) more comfortable helping classroom teachers deal with students with disabilities.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 152 | 35% |
| Agree | 256 | 59% |
| Disagree | 24 | 6% |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 432 | 100% |

7. I am interested in using follow-up activities about children with disabilities.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 256 | 74% |
| No | 89 | 26% |
| Total | 345 | 100% |

8. It would be helpful for me as a teacher to read specific information on disabilities.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 331 | 79% |
| No | 87 | 21% |
| Total | 418 | 100% |

9. I would appreciate information that would enable me to better recognize "hidden disabilities."

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 213 | 56% |
| No | 165 | 44% |
| Total | 378 | 100% |

10. I would like information about communicating with parents of children with disabilities.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 154 | 42% |
| No | 216 | 58% |
| Total | 370 | 100% |

11. I would be interested in receiving training about methods of fostering positive attitudes about disabilities.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 117 | 35% |
| No | 220 | 65% |
| Total | 337 | 100% |

Comments from the 2000-2001 Adult Evaluations

- "Increasing knowledge and information help to take away the fear of the unknown."
- "I don't know how for you to improve it because I thought it was excellent."
- "As a parent of a daughter with disabilities, I so much appreciate this program."
- "Many thanks! Understanding one another builds community and fosters many positive behaviors at school."
- "The presentation was beautiful and it gave me, as an adult, new insights into the disabilities that were talked about."
- "I am a regular education teacher with extensive training in special education (autism). This was excellent! I commend your program."

**Teacher-Adult Evaluation Conclusions**

Over 99 percent of the teachers and adults rated the program as excellent or very good, and felt the program was informative and appropriate for their students.

One hundred percent of the teachers and other adults responding to the questionnaire believed that the attitudes of students toward children with disabilities would improve to some degree as a result of the COUNT ME IN program. In addition, 99% of those responding agreed that they are now more comfortable after seeing the program in helping students without disabilities understand disabilities, and 97% felt more comfortable helping a student with a disability fit into their classroom. Inclusion and integration work to benefit everyone.

The adults surveyed included preschool teachers; parents, regular teachers, special education teachers, administrators, classroom aides, substitute teachers, social workers, psychologists, nurses and counselors.

*The COUNT ME IN Resource Manual on Disabilities* is given to each school where the program is presented and has suggested follow-up activities. Seventy-four percent of the teachers/adults responding to the

questions were interested in using follow-up activities with their students and 79% marked that it would be helpful for them to read specific information on disabilities. *The Resource Manual on Disabilities* provides that information in an easily read format. The new resource manual, *Disability Awareness: A Guidebook for Families and Educators* has replaced *The COUNT ME IN Resource Manual on Disabilities*.

## Conclusion

The COUNT ME IN Project seeks to foster positive attitudes about people with disabilities. This year, volunteers and staff presented 171 CMI puppet shows that reached 12,156 student and 950 adults. Since the program's inception, more than 279,000 people have been reached with this information.

# The Abuse Prevention Project
## Includes: Let's Prevent Abuse & Family Strengths

PACER's Abuse Prevention Project began in 1984 with the LET'S PREVENT ABUSE (LPA) puppet program. The program grew out of awareness that people with disabilities are more vulnerable to maltreatment in unique ways.

During the year 1999 (the last year tabulated) there were 11,113 reported cases of maltreatment reported to the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Of these, 1,484 children reported had disabilities. This number represents approximately 13.4% of the reported cases of maltreatment were children who have disabilities.

In the past, LPA included Early Childhood Prevention Training for early childhood professionals and other service providers, Training for Elementary Educators on Child Abuse, Training for Foster Parents on Abuse Prevention, Parent Education, Prevention Puppet Shows for elementary age children and two training handbooks. During this past year, the LPA program has just been able to respond and provide individual requests for training, as the program has not received funding for additional program development.

The program received over 350 calls and e-mails requesting resources, referral to appropriate resources, support and requests for specific information. Fifty-one percent of these calls were from parents and the remaining from professionals. One parent calls yearly to update the staff about the activities of her children since LPA staff were instrumental in helping her to regain custody of her children.

PACER staff in the LPA project frequently acts as a liaison for families who are in need of services and the services that are available to serve them. The needs of many of the families are multiple and complex. They range from a critical need for respite services, to help for the children in school based programs, to needing someone to really listen to what their needs are, help them to verbalize these needs and connect up with the agencies funded to meet these needs.

Currently, there is only funding for on-going replication of the puppet shows. Growing from the needs identified from The Abuse Project, there are two additional programs currently funded. These include the Family Strengths Program and the Juvenile Justice Project. (See separate report)

**Replication and Training**

During 2000-2001, LPA held two volunteer training sessions attended by 23 people. The trainings were held January 23, 2001 in Park Rapids, Minnesota for 12 volunteers and on March 17, 2001 in Monroe, North Carolina for 11 volunteers. The training includes information on child maltreatment, child abuse prevention, mandated reporting, and puppetry techniques.

At the end of the trainings each volunteer was asked to complete an evaluation form rating the training. One hundred percent of the respondents rated the training as either excellent or very good.

**Puppet Shows**

Replication of the Let's Prevent Abuse puppet shows enables more children and adults to be reached with important information about child abuse prevention. The LPA puppet shows are presented by volunteers with much information and training about the effects of maltreatment on children. The puppet shows are presented using four child-sized and diverse puppets. The information shared through the puppets includes information about stranger abduction, physical and sexual abuse, and to whom children can speak if they are feeling uncomfortable with touch.

The shows are presented to children in grades one through four. During this past year, 28 shows were given for 1,424 children and 119 adults (administrators, educators, paraprofessionals, parents, and social workers) at 14 schools. PACER provides educators with pre- and post- show complementary materials to use with students as well as an educator's guide addressing child maltreatment issues. PACER also provides the schools with pre-show notification letters to parents. Parents are always welcome to attend performances at their children's school.

Of the 119 adults who observed the puppet shows, 89 (75%) completed the evaluations. The following is a compilation of their responses:

1. Overall, how would you rate the presentation?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 52 | 58% |
| Very good | 30 | 34% |
| Good | 7 | 8% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 89 | 100% |

2. Was the program appropriately geared toward the audience?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 89 | 100% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 89 | 100% |

3. Are you familiar with your school's reporting policy on abuse?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 78 | 88% |
| No | 8 | 9% |
| I don't know | 3 | 3% |
| Total | 89 | 100% |

4. In what areas would you like more information?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Physical & behavioral indicators of child sexual abuse | 18 | 28% |
| How to talk with a child making a report of abuse | 18 | 28% |
| The child protection process once a report of suspected Child abuse has been made | 17 | 26% |
| Information on mandated reporting laws, responsibilities and liabilities | 12 | 18% |
| Total | 65 | 100% |

5. Do you have any suggestions for improving the program?
   - "Explain a little more on spanking versus abuse"
   - "Maybe more time with a few more examples"
   - "Discuss neglect as form of abuse"
   - "It was great – very comprehensive & child oriented"
   - "Encourage kids to go home and talk to parents"
   - "It was well done – respectful…all questions were answered and welcomed"

Following the puppet programs, follow-up surveys are sent to the mandated reporters asking about feedback following the program. Of the 13 surveys sent, 7 (54%) were returned, but not all questions were answered. They indicated:

1. Since the LPA presentation, how many cases of child abuse were reported:
   Physical Abuse: 4 Sexual Abuse: 0 Other: 0
   A. How many of these reports were filed by a mandated reporter? 3
   B. If known, how many reports were substantiated? 0
   C. How many of these reports were from a child with a disability? 2

2. What was the approximate number of students who saw the show? 673
   How many of those students had a disability? 70 – one respondent did not answer, he said it was hard to know the number of students with disabilities.
   What was the number of teachers who were present for the performance? 49

3. Do you feel this program had a positive or adverse effect on children in your school that you suspected to be victims of abuse?
   Positive: 7 Adverse: 0

4. Did you receive any negative or positive responses from parents about the show?
   Positive: 4 Negative: 0
   3 reports stated they received no response from parents.

5. Did you have any responses from teachers about the program?
   Yes: 5 No: 2
   Please explain:
   - "The show planted the seed..."
   - "Good to see the kids talking about the show afterwards."
   - " Teachers felt the program was well done and informative, they would recommend to other groups."
   - "Ongoing program and already requested to repeat next year."

## Family Strengths Program

PACER's Family Strengths program originated in 1991 with a grant from the Minnesota Children's Trust Fund (CTF). This program, designed to benefit families with children aged birth through five with and without disabilities, is now in its third funding cycle of programming.

Family Strengths recognizes that preventing child abuse involves building on the strengths of individuals, families, and communities. Extensive family and community input has shaped the program at every stage.

Program components include publications for families, puppet shows for preschoolers, and workshops for service providers. A focus of this program is cultural and linguistic adaptation for the Hmong and Latino communities.

### Publications

The Family Strengths Series is a five-part booklet and audiotape series for parents. Designed to be accessible to parents and caregivers with limited English or literacy skills, it teaches parents how they are fostering their child's development in many areas by the sensitive care they provide. The first three books are written in the voice of the child, and the last two in the voice of the parent. Each booklet is full of snapshots of children from diverse backgrounds. Each contains a listing of local and national resources for families. The series of five 25-page booklets and one 90-minute cassette (a reading of all five booklets) is available in Hmong, English, and Spanish. These titles are:

*Lovable Me! A Guide to Your Baby*
*Lovable Me! A Guide to Your Toddler*
*Lovable Me! A Guide to Your Preschooler*
*I Am My Child's First Teacher*
*My Child has a Disability*

Extensive research helped determine the form and content of the series. Focus groups were held to ascertain what caregivers wanted to learn, what format they would prefer, and what types of resources they would find helpful. Professionals from a variety of disciplines were interviewed. Input from these sources, as well as from 500 adults who were surveyed, was integrated into each booklet.

Numerous parents and professionals, including both PACER staff and external reviewers, reviewed each booklet. The reviewers reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of families who will utilize these materials. Paramount in the development of these materials was a desire to respect the diverse needs, beliefs, and values of families, and to create a resource that is useful to many families.

Relationships have been established with over sixty organizations that contributed to the Family Strengths booklets. Collaborative Partners participated in many ways. They provided input, hosted focus groups, reviewed drafts, submitted photos, and facilitated meetings with families, offered information for the resource listings, and provided ideas to adapt the material to be culturally appropriate for specific populations.

Over 4,000 books have already reached families and organizations that provide family education, public health, or early childhood services in Minnesota. Further efforts are in progress to ensure a wide distribution of the series.

The Family Strengths program provided individual assistance to 115 individuals.

**Puppet Program**

The Family Strengths Puppet Program features child-sized, multicultural puppets, some with and some without disabilities. The puppets' stories help preschoolers feel good about themselves, their families, and their culture. Children learn about the abilities of people with disabilities and about forming friendships across differences of ability, culture, and language. Adults report that the show offers them examples of messages to reinforce with their children, in child-friendly language. Shows are performed in Hmong, Spanish, or English, and feature Hmong, Latino, and African American puppets.

Thirty-one puppet programs were presented for a total of 666 children and 472 adults, a total of 1,138 people. Two shows were presented in Hmong and two in Spanish. Adults, parents and staff, and school-age children completed 350 evaluations were completed and turned in. The responses of preschool children were assessed by the puppeteers' observations of their body language and verbal response to the show.

A majority of the children responded favorably to the shows, as evidenced by their attentiveness and verbal participation in the show.

Parents, staff and some children completed evaluations while not all of the individuals answered all of the questions. Questions 4 and 5 were open-ended.

1. Did you like the show?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 311 | 89% |
| Somewhat | 34 | 10% |
| Not much | 2 | 1% |
| No | 1 | <1% |
| Total | 348 | 100% |

2. The show is appropriate for ages 3-5?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 301 | 88% |
| Somewhat | 28 | 8% |
| Not much | 6 | 2% |
| No | 7 | 2% |
| Total | 342 | 100% |

3. The children learned something from this presentation?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 274 | 81% |
| Somewhat | 41 | 12% |
| Not much | 14 | 4% |
| No | 9 | 3% |
| Total | 338 | 100% |

4. What do you think the children learned?

- "How to make friends"
- "Acceptance and respect"
- "About disability and differences between people"
- "Love is important in a family"

5. What did adults learn from this show?

- "Acceptance and respect"
- "How to teach children about accept and respect"
- "About disability, Hmong culture, and differences between people"
- "To understand and respond to children's curiosity"

### Workshops

Family Strengths workshops are designed to help professionals increase their ability to partner with families. Six workshops were held this year for a total of 101 participants. Conference evaluations were completed by participants at and returned to the conference organizers at the workshops that were components of conferences for Special Education Professionals and Social Workers. Evaluations from the workshops that were presented for staff groups at a particular organization are attached. One of these workshops was presented in Spanish, and all were tailored to the interests and concerns of each group.

The four workshops presented for specific organizations (not conferences) resulted in 27 completed evaluations. Several participants remarked that while the content was not new, the workshop served as a welcome reminder to maintain a positive attitude towards families. The following is the overall response to the workshops.

How would you rate today's workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 8 | 30% |
| Very good | 18 | 67% |
| Good | 1 | 3% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

## Conclusion

The Abuse Prevention Project provided two trainings for 23 individuals. The LET'S PREVENT ABUSE puppet program reached 1,424 children and 119 adults at 28 shows. Family Strengths presented six workshops for 101 participants and 31 puppet shows for 666 children and 472 adults. PACER's Web site had more than 3,000 visits to its Abuse Prevention Project link. The five booklet Family Strengths Series was translated into Spanish and Hmong and developed into audiotape form.

The Abuse Prevention Project programs reflect PACER's commitment to address issues affecting people with disabilities across many areas of their lives. The Abuse Prevention Project and its components, LET'S PREVENT ABUSE and Family Strengths strengthen families through education and support.

# Juvenile Justice Project

PACER'S Project on Juvenile Justice is concerned with the complex needs of youthful offenders with disabilities and their families. Some of the concerns that are being addressed through this grant include:

- Development of increased information for parents about their rights and their children's right in court and in interactions with the police.
- Identification of strategies for accessing necessary educational and mental health services for offenders with disabilities.
- Dissemination of a wide range of newly published research to attorneys, probation officers and judges about special education entitlements and strategies that work for youth with disabilities.
- More information developed and distributed to parents and corrections personnel about the types and characteristics of emotional, behavioral, learning and developmental disabilities common in juvenile offenders, and the connection between the presence of specific disabilities and a higher risk for involvement in criminal behavior.
- Development of information for professionals in the juvenile justice system and for parents of juvenile offenders about collaboration.
- Dissemination of research to corrections professionals about outcome based studies on the provision of mental health and academic services for youth with disabilities.
- Development of resources focusing on transition planning and aftercare services for offenders with disabilities and their families.

**Background**

The Juvenile Justice project was developed in 1995 with assistance from The McKnight Foundation and the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation. It was the first in the nation to study the relationship between a diagnosis of disabilities such as LD, ADHD, depression, developmental disabilities, and a higher vulnerability for involvement in delinquent and criminal behaviors.

In the early years, funding for the project also came from the state Department of Children Families and Learning and the Department of Corrections. In 1999, the Juvenile Justice Project coordinator was invited to join a collaboration of researchers from several universities to form the National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice (NCEDJJ) as an Associate Director.

In 2000-2001, state funding for the Juvenile Justice Project came from the Minnesota Department of Children Families and Learning and through EDJJ from the U.S. Department of Education (OSEP) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Each year, this project has responded to more requests from parents and professionals in Minnesota and nationally to share information, resources, training and advocacy skills. PACER has been able to accomplish many of these requests with the assistance of parent training centers nation-wide and more recently, through the collaboration with EDJJ.

Research studies published within the past year continue to support trends in juvenile justice that PACER identified as early as 1996. These include:

- Youth with disabilities are at greater risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system.
- Schools are using juvenile court as a resource for disciplining youth with behavioral disorders rather than using interventions mandated through IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act (504 plans).
- There is an overrepresentation of youth of color with disabilities in the juvenile justice system.

- Juvenile court personnel and corrections staff needs more training about characteristics of disabilities and their impact on behaviors. Without this information, dispositional decisions may be biased, inappropriate and ineffective.
- Often, youth with disabilities do not get the special education services and interventions they need when they are incarcerated.
- Youth referred to the adult correctional system are more likely to re-offend at a more rapid rate and are less likely to receive the special education services and therapies to which they are entitled.
- There is no pathway for parent involvement in juvenile court. When parents do learn their rights, and advocate for their child, they are often met with defensive and guilt producing responses.
- There is a serious gap in the availability of transition and aftercare services.

In the past year, 207 professionals attended six trainings and presentations about juvenile justice and youth with disabilities at the state level. More than 500 parents and professionals attended EDJJ presentations and workshops nationally. The project coordinator spoke with approximately 500 parents and professionals regarding questions pertaining to youthful offenders with disabilities and responded to approximately 250 e-mail inquiries.

The most problematic issues for youth with disabilities in the juvenile court and corrections system continue to be:

- Inadequate identification of disabilities among youth with behavioral issues in school and in the juvenile justice system. Too often, they are labeled as conduct disordered or EBD when their behaviors are in fact, disability-driven.
- Inappropriate referral of youth to the juvenile justice system by school personnel.
- Inappropriate referral of offenders with disabilities to programs that are unable to provide specific disability-focused interventions.
- Lack of aftercare planning and supports to offenders and their families when their child returns to the community.
- Inadequate standards and monitoring of correctional programs to ensure that they are meeting mental health, learning and other disability needs.

In 2000-2001 the goals of state juvenile justice project grant were:

1. To give 2-3 workshops for parents and professionals from the Department of Corrections, the Public Defenders Department and the Department of Human Services.
2. To respond to individual requests for information about specific disabilities in the justice system.
3. To re-write the juvenile justice project brochure.
4. To continue writing about issues relevant to youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system.

**Goal 1: PACER will give two-three presentations and workshops for 150 parents and juvenile justice professionals and related personnel (including special educators) about youth with at-risk behaviors and disabilities vulnerable for involvement in criminal activity.**

**Presentations and Workshops**

| Date | Location | Group | Attending |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06/22/00 | Minneapolis, MN | Brain Injury Association | 10 |
| 09/22/00 | Willmar, MN | PACT 4 for Families | 12 |
| 10/10/00 | Princeton, MN | EBD workshop | 50 |
| 10/13/00 | Foley, MN | Social Work Association | 100 |
| 02/13/01 | St. Paul, MN | SEAC/DCFL | 25 |
| 04/09/01 | St. Cloud, MN | Children's Mental Health | 10 |
| Total | | | 207 |

**University of Minnesota Adolescent Medicine Residents Lectures**

Residents in adolescent medicine at the University of Minnesota Medical attended didactic lectures once a month from October through August. Following the final lecture, evaluations about the course were completed. Not all of the residents answered all of the questions. Eighty-five percent rated the workshop as excellent or very good.

1. Objectives for the session were stated:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Clearly | 5 | 45% |
| Somewhat | 6 | 55% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 11 | 100% |

B. The session was well taught

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very well | 4 | 31% |
| Well | 5 | 38% |
| Somewhat | 4 | 31% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 13 | 100% |

C The session increased my
Knowledge base in adolescent health

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very much | 3 | 25% |
| Much | 5 | 42% |
| Somewhat | 3 | 25% |
| Not at all | 1 | 8% |
| Total | 12 | 100% |

D. Clinical skills

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very Much | 1 | 12% |
| Much | 3 | 38% |
| Somewhat | 4 | 50% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 8 | 100% |

E. Leadership skills and knowledge

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very much | 2 | 15% |
| Much | 6 | 46% |
| Somewhat | 5 | 39% |
| Not at All | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 13 | 100% |

F. Regarding the seminar
The teaching was:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Outstanding | 3 | 23% |
| Very Good | 8 | 62% |
| Average | 2 | 15% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 13 | 100% |

G. Rate the instructional materials

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Outstanding | 8 | 62% |
| Very Good | 4 | 31% |
| Average | 1 | 7% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 13 | 100% |

The Juvenile Justice staff is a member of the following Minnesota task forces:

- Minnesota Organization Fetal Alcohol Curriculum Committee
- Red Wing Mental Health Unit Planning Department of Corrections

Participants in PACER workshops/presentations included special educators, social workers, psychologists, attorneys, probation officers, parents, foster parents, chemical health counselors, public health nurses, etc. Trainings and workshops are developed in consultation with each community and according to each group's stated training needs. Evaluation forms were adapted for the topics addressed in each workshop.
Training packets that included an agenda, recent scientific papers and reports, and information about PACER were distributed at each workshop and presentation.

Workshop and presentation styles included lecture, question and answer, round table discussion and panel format. The information is reinforced with overheads developed at PACER. The Juvenile Justice Project has developed new transparencies on strategies to use in court and on female offenders with disabilities. In addition the original transparencies have been updated and improved as new research becomes available.

**Goal 2: To provide individual assistance to families and professionals about youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system.**

During this funding year, the Juvenile Justice staff responded to almost 500 calls from parents and professionals in Minnesota and nationally. The project's Web site received more than 10,800 visits and there were approximately 250 e-mail messages requesting assistance and resources dealing with Juvenile Justice issues.

During 2000-2001, issues of greatest concern to **professionals** were:

- "How to determine whether youth are being appropriately referred to court by schools?"
- "How to develop plans that will help parents when their child comes home from placement."
- "How to develop more effective aftercare plans for youth leaving the justice settings."
- "How to make schools more accountable for special education services instead of charging youth with criminal behaviors?"
- "What kinds of services are appropriate for youth with mental health diagnoses?"
- "How can we get accountability from youth and from placements?"

Issues of greatest concern for **parents** were:

- "What rights does my child have when he or she comes to court?"
- "When is the best time to provide disability information to the court?"
- "What should I do when my child is arrested and interrogated?"
- "What do I do if the court places my child in a program that doesn't provide services?"
- "What can I do when they say they can't afford to provide those services?"
- "It is getting much easier to charge youth with crimes in schools. Most of the time they're just being kids. How do we change that?"

- "My son was charged with disorderly conduct or making terrorist threats. He was only frustrated, but we're going to court anyways. How can I help him?"
- "My child has told me that a staff person has been harassing him in the correctional setting. What can I do when they won't believe my son or listen to me?"
- "My child came home from a facility after being there for 6 months. His school won't take him back. What should I do?"
- "My child doesn't "get it" and they keep punishing him for behaviors that are his disability. Who should I talk to?"

### Goal 3 and 4: Written Materials

The Juvenile Justice brochure was updated this spring and printed and is included in all presentations and mailings. Other publications that were written are:

- Federation of Families publication on Juvenile Justice
- Mandated Services for youth in the juvenile justice system

## The National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ)

October 1999, The National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (NCEDJJ) was established. As a five year grant, it is to provide collaborative research, training, technical assistance and a dissemination program to help understand and develop more effective responses to the needs of youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system (JJS) or those at risk for involvement with the JJS. Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ) is a collaborative project and is funded by OSEP of the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice. PACER, as a subcontractor, will do the following:

1. Provide parent training activities for NCEDJJ
2. Participate in the development of materials and information related to parent perspectives and
3. Review research, training and dissemination activities to ensure that parent and family perspectives are represented.

### EDJJ Presentations

As part of the information dissemination activities, PACER provided nine presentations to 524 people about and the Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice Project. They were:

| Date | Location | Attendance |
|---|---|---|
| 06/01/00 | Cape Cod, MA | 60 |
| 07/13-14/00 | San Francisco, CA | 60 |
| 07/25/00 | Sheridan, WY | 18 |
| 11/01/00 | Portland, OR | 6 |
| 11/14/00 | Des Moines, IA | 35 |
| 11/15-16/00 | Phoenix, AZ | 100 |
| 01/25-26/01 | Washington, DC | 100 |
| 04/09/01 | Kansas City, KS | 60 |
| 05/11/01 | Portland, ME | 85 |
| Total | | 524 |

Sheridan, Wyoming; All day Workshop Evaluation:
Not all the participants completed evaluations nor answered all the questions.

| Attendance: | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parent Advocates: | 9 | 60% |
| Social Service Providers: | 2 | 13% |
| Special education Professional: | 1 | 7% |
| Other: | 3 | 20% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

To what degree did this workshop increase your awareness about:
A. Risk Factors for youth with disabilities for involvement in delinquency:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very Much | 7 | 47% |
| Much | 7 | 47% |
| Some | 1 | 6% |
| Little | 0 | 0% |
| Had much knowledge | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

B. Types and characteristics of disabilities common in youth in the justice system:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very Much | 5 | 33% |
| Much | 7 | 47% |
| Some | 2 | 13% |
| Little | 0 | 0% |
| Had much knowledge | 1 | 7% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

C. Special education rights for youth in the justice system:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very Much | 2 | 15% |
| Much | 7 | 54% |
| Some | 1 | 8% |
| Little | 0 | 0% |
| Had much knowledge: | 3 | 23% |
| Total | 13 | 100% |

D. How to work with families more effectively:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very much | 3 | 20% |
| Much | 3 | 20% |
| Some | 6 | 40% |
| Little | 0 | 0% |
| Had much knowledge | 3 | 20% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

E. Unpromising approaches that are effective with this population:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very much | 3 | 20% |
| Much | 7 | 47% |
| Some | 5 | 33% |
| Little | 0 | 0% |
| Had much knowledge | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

F. How would you rate today's workshop:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 10 | 67% |
| Very Good | 4 | 27% |
| Good | 1 | 6% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 15 | 100% |

Two-thirds rated the workshop as excellent and one third rated it as very good or good.

## Conclusion

In funding the Juvenile Justice Project, the Department of Children Learning and Families, the Department of Justice, and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services reinforce their commitment to promoting collaborative approaches for addressing the complex needs of offenders with disabilities. In addition they acknowledge that there are gaps in serving juvenile offenders that need to be addressed.

Whenever possible, PACER has made a concerted effort to raise issues relevant to youth with disabilities in the justice system.

Rehabilitation for offenders with multiple disability needs is an intensive and challenging responsibility. Every year, new research demonstrates potential that results from planning, structure, skill building and family involvement. Punishment based programs are less successful, especially for juvenile offenders with disabilities. In fact, family or surrogate family involvement is a crucial part of any correctional plan.

PACER's Juvenile Justice Project continues to provide assistance and support to families and professionals. With each year, the project is able to provide more specific answers and better strategies to parents who are worn out from frustration. It is a challenging population, but the opportunities that enable parents and children to be valued and treated with respect are compelling. It is always challenging to develop the resources that will assist a parent in advocating for their child in court or help a public defender by providing information about special education. More professionals are understand the issues more clearly, and attempting to bring parents into planning in a more respectful way.

The efforts to address the needs of youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system remain difficult, especially when a common perception is that if you commit a crime, you don't deserve special services.

The project still believes that as PACER is more successful in assisting professionals and parents to advocate more effectively on behalf of at-risk youth and offenders with disabilities, it will be possible to arrive at justice that is both fair and rehabilitative.

# Computer Resource Center

The PACER Computer Resource Center (CRC) strives to help children and young adults with disabilities and their family's access and learn how to use computers, educational software and assistive technology to maximize their potential. Technology can open doors to communication, physical control, learning, and enhance many aspects of an individual's life.

The Computer Resource Center's mission is to "provide a Minnesota center dedicated to making the benefits of technology more accessible to children and young adults with disabilities, through a collaborated effort to involve parents, professionals and consumers with technology." To accomplish its mission, the Center educates families and professionals about assistive technology through workshops for parents and professionals, in-depth training for professionals, private family consultations, software and assistive device library, a statewide information and referral service, and a newsletter.

The Computer Resource Center began in 1987 when the Apple Computer Company selected PACER as one of the 11 parent centers nationally to serve as a charter member of the Alliance for Technology Access. Today, the Computer Resource Center continues an active relationship with the Alliance for Technology Access, which has members in most states. The Computer Resource Center is funded by corporate, foundation and individual donations.

The following report is for June 1, 2000 through May 31, 2001. During this period, the Computer Resource Center had 3,891 total contacts through the different services available.

**Total Contacts (excluding newsletter and web site visits):**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parents | 1243 | 32% |
| Professionals | 2103 | 54% |
| Consumers | 370 | 10% |
| Other | 175 | 4% |
| Total | 3891 | 100% |

**Means of Contact:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Consultations | 314 | 8% |
| Presentations* | 2069 | 53% |
| Research/Referral | 1508 | 39% |
| Total | 3891 | 100% |

**Includes workshops, in-services and technology fairs*

**Presentations**

This year the CRC provided 105 presentations, workshops, in-services and participated in technology fairs in Minnesota and the country on various assistive technology topics, reaching 2,069 people.

**Attendance profile:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parents | 472 | 23% |
| Professionals | 1476 | 71% |
| Consumers | 49 | 2% |
| Other | 72 | 4% |
| Total | 2069 | 100% |

The CRC has booths at technology fairs and gives tours of the Computer Resource Center for parents and professionals. The goal is to share information about computers, software and assistive technology, and to answer questions about the Computer Resource Center and its services. From June 1, 2000 through May 31, 2001, the CRC gave 52 presentations, reaching 824 people.

**Tours and Technology Fairs**

| Date | Location | Description | Par | Pro | Con | Oth | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/06/00 | CRC | Visitor Tour | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 06/09/00 | CRC | Family Tour | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| 06/13/00 | CRC | Individual Demo | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 06/14/00 | CRC | R & W Demo – Wagner | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 06/21/00 | CRC | SLL Database Tour | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 06/28/00 | CRC | Czech Pro Tour | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 07/10/00 | Minneapolis | Opportunity Partners | 0 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 20 |
| 07/13/00 | CRC | Individual Tour | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 07/26/00 | Minneapolis | ADA Celebration Booth | 5 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| 08/17/00 | CRC | Speech/Lang Demo | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 08/18/00 | St. Paul | Presentation to STAR Com. | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 08/30/00 | CRC | African Visitors Tour | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 09/08/00 | Owatonna | CAN Action Network | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 09/12/00 | St. Paul | STAR Committee | 0 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| 09/15/00 | Minneapolis | Rehab Open House | 75 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 175 |
| 010/3/00 | Bloomington | AT at Work Conference | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| 010/9/00 | CRC | Japanese Visitors Tour | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| 10/12/00 | CRC | Individual Tour | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 10/12/00 | Brooklyn Park | Intro to AT | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 10/26/00 | CRC | Individual Tour | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 10/26/00 | CRC | Individual Demo | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 12/01/00 | CRC | Lakeville Teachers Tour | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 12/07/00 | St. Paul | STAR/CAN Presentation | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 12/13/00 | CRC | Woodbury Teachers Tour | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 12/21/00 | CRC | Moundsview Teacher Tour | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 01/17/01 | St. Paul | AT at the Capitol | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 01/23/01 | CRC | IGH College Tour | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 01/24/01 | CRC | Professionals Tour | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 01/15/01 | CRC | Individual Tour | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 01/31/01 | CRC | Professionals Tour | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 02/05/01 | CRC | Aug Com Demo | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 18 |
| 02/10/01 | CRC | IntelliTools Demo | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 02/12/01 | CRC | St. Kate's Student Tour | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 02/16/01 | CRC | Professional Tour | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 02/20/01 | CRC | Individual Tour | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 2/24-27/01 | Washington DC | KITE Info Booth: NECTAS | 50 | 150 | 0 | 0 | 200 |
| 02/24/01 | Bloomington | Bloomington Loves It's Kids | 24 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 54 |
| 02/26/01 | CRC | CRC Tour | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 7 |
| 02/26/01 | Brooklyn Park | CEC Presentation | 0 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| 02/27/01 | CRC | Humboldt Sr. High Tour | 0 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 14 |
| 03/09/01 | CRC | CRC Tour | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 03/23/01 | CRC | Tour & Demo Advocates | 2 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| 03/30/01 | CRC | Tour Special Ed Teachers | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 04/04/01 | CRC | Individual Tour | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 04/16/01 | CRC | Individual Tour/Demo | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 04/16/01 | CRC | Individual Demo | 3 | 10 | 3 | 0 | 16 |
| 04/17/01 | CRC | Individual Demo | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 04/24/01 | CRC | Partnership Resources Tour | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| 05/10/01 | CRC | Individual Tour | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 05/15/01 | CRC | EI Alliance Tour | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 05/17/01 | CRC | Rehab Services Tour | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 05/31/01 | CRC | NY Agency Tour | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Total | | | 181 | 560 | 44 | 39 | 824 |

**Workshops and In-service Trainings**

The Computer Resource Center offers workshops around the state of Minnesota to parents of children and young adults with disabilities and professionals who work with them. Workshops are generally two to four hours in length some focusing on the needs of low-income and rural communities. The workshop topics focus on assistive technology for a wide range of ages and disabilities.

The CRC conducts in-service trainings for professionals on the latest developments in assistive technology. The design and depth of the training varies according to the needs of the requesting group. The Computer Resource Center's staff also present at national technology conferences on a variety of technology topics. The CRC presented 53 workshops and in-services in Minnesota and nationally reaching 1,245 people.

**Location of workshops and in-service trainings:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Greater MN | 23 | 43% |
| Metro area | 28 | 53% |
| Out of MN | 2 | 4% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

| Date | Location | Presentation Title | Par | Pro | Con | Oth | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 06/16/00 | Phoenix, AZ | Western Region Parent Training Centers - Power Point | 0 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| 08/09/00 | Minneapolis | IntelliPics Workshop | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 08/24/00 | Rosemount | Intro to AT | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| 08/30/00 | Minneapolis | Computer Integration – YMCA | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 09/15/00 | Rochester, MN | ARC State Conference | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| 09/19/00 | Hutchinson | ABC's of AT | 15 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| 09/25/00 | Owatonna | Intro to AAC | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| 09/26/00 | Plymouth | Tech Fest Writing | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 09/28/00 | St. Cloud | Intro to AAC | 10 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| 10/04/00 | Nay Ah Shing | ABC's of AT | 0 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 31 |
| 10/06/00 | Minneapolis | If You Give a Kid a Computer | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 10/10/00 | Fergus Falls | Intro to AAC | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| 11/01/00 | Bloomington | ABC's of AT & IDEA Policy | 0 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 40 |
| 11/02/00 | Thief River Falls | Introduction to AAC | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 11/09/00 | Duluth | Introduction to AAC | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| 11/16/00 | St. Paul | Introduction to AAC | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 |
| 11/21/00 | Marshall | Introduction to AAC | 9 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| 12/04/00 | Hibbing | ABC's of AT | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| 12/07/00 | Brooklyn Park | Software for Students w/ LD | 6 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| 12/11/00 | Duluth | ABC's of AT | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| 12/19/00 | Burnsville | Technology & Transition | 4 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| 01/17/01 | PACER | Making Connections: AAC | 50 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 75 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 01/12/01 | Albuquerque NM | TAM Conference: Parents & Professionals in Partnership | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 01/23/01 | Grand Rapids | ABC's of AT | 5 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 16 |
| 02/05/01 | Woodbury | In-service WWS & Co:Writer | 0 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 27 |
| 02/06/01 | PACER | EC Workshop | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 30 |
| 02/13/01 | St. Cloud | Intro To PACER | 0 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| 02/21/01 | PACER | Environmental Control Units | 45 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 90 |
| 02/23/01 | Golden Valley | In-service Parkinson's Center | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| 03/01/01 | Brainerd | Reading Software Workshop | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 03/07/01 | PACER | Play & Learn Workshop | 5 | 65 | 0 | 0 | 70 |
| 03/08/01 | Monticello | Technology for LD | 15 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 03/11/01 | Marshall | If you Give a Kid a Computer | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 03/14/01 | CRC | LD In-service | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 03/15/01 | Bemidji | If you Give a Kid a Computer | 0 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 53 |
| 03/22/01 | Red Wing | Intro to AAC | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| 03/26/01 | St. Cloud | Intro to AT | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 03/27/01 | Mankato | AT Guideline Training | 8 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 21 |
| 03/29/01 | Little Canada | Writing Fest | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 03/30/01 | Bloomington | Aug Com In-service | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| 04/04/01 | Cottage Grove | Autism Parent Group | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| 04/06/01 | Bloomington | MSHA Conference: Literacy | 0 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| 04/06/01 | Bloomington | MSHA Conference: Overview of AT | 0 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 39 |
| 04/11/01 | PACER | Literacy for All | 8 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| 04/23/01 | Rochester MN | Charting the C's: Intro to Voice Recognition | 0 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 53 |
| 04/24/01 | Rochester MN | Charting the C's: Environmental Controls | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| 04/25/01 | CRC | Intro to AT | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 04/28/01 | Brainerd | MN AT Guidelines | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| 04/28/01 | PACER | Early Childhood Technology | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 05/02/01 | Rosemont | What's New in AT | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| 05/08/01 | Moorhead | Intro to AT | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| 05/29/01 | U of MN | EC Workshop | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 05/31/01 | Burnsville | EC Workshop | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Total | | | 291 | 916 | 5 | 33 | 1245 |

**Workshop and In-service Evaluation Results**

To evaluate the services provided through workshops and trainings, each person who attended was asked to complete an evaluation survey at the end of the workshop. There were 1,245 attendees to Computer Resource Center workshops. Of those attending, 535 (43%) completed evaluations. Not all persons answered all questions.

| 1. Are you a (n)? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Professional | 355 | 66% |
| Parent/Relative of a child with a disability | 134 | 25% |
| Individual with a disability | 4 | 1% |
| Other | 42 | 8% |
| Total | 535 | 100% |

2. What is your child's primary disability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mental retardation | 20 | 15% |
| Physical disability | 19 | 14% |
| Autism/PDD | 19 | 14% |
| Multiple disabilities | 17 | 13% |
| Learning disability | 18 | 13% |
| ADD/ADHD | 14 | 10% |
| Speech/language deficit | 9 | 7% |
| Deaf/hearing impaired | 5 | 4% |
| Blind/visually impaired | 4 | 3% |
| TBI | 2 | 2% |
| Other | 7 | 5% |
| Total | 134 | 100% |

3. What is the age of the person with a disability?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 - 2 | 4 | 3% |
| 3 - 5 | 20 | 15% |
| 6 – 8 | 28 | 21% |
| 9 – 11 | 15 | 11% |
| 12 – 14 | 27 | 20% |
| 15 - 17 | 18 | 13% |
| 18 and older | 22 | 17% |
| Total | 134 | 100% |

4. How would you rate this workshop?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 240 | 46% |
| Very Good | 218 | 42% |
| Good | 61 | 11% |
| Fair | 4 | 1% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 523 | 100% |

5. What was most helpful for you?

- "A resource to get information for technology assistance for children. I learned that there is a lot of technology support to help children."
- "I need to hear over and over how to help my child. I always learn something new – thanks!"
- "Thank you! Brochures and handouts are excellent for reference/referrals/ideas much appreciated!"
- "So good – just wish more parents could hear the presentation."
- "I love hands-on experiences ☺ these experiences along with peer interaction are most beneficial."
- "Good presenters – they know their materials well and explained it thoroughly."
- "I was just amazed at all the types of technology available and all that can be done!"

**Software Lending Library**

The Software Lending Library (SLL) is a unique service for Minnesota parents of children and young adults with disabilities and the professionals who work with them. The SLL allows members the opportunity to try a variety of commercial and disability-specific educational software and assistive technology devices. The Software Lending Library currently has almost 1,600 software programs and adaptive devices available for loan for use in home or school. There are as of May 31, 2001, 265 Software Lending Library members throughout Minnesota.

The library's software programs and devices were circulated 2,714 times. This was done either by in person visits to the SLL or borrowed using the mail from June 1, 2000 to May 31, 2001.

1. Software Lending Library member detail as of May 31, 2001:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parents | 203 | 77% |
| Professionals | 56 | 21% |
| Consumers | 5 | 2% |
| Other | 1 | <1% |
| Total | 265 | 100% |

2. Software Lending Library numbers of pieces checked out:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Out State (used mail service) | 1346 | 50% |
| Metro (personal visits) | 1368 | 50% |
| Total | 2714 | 100% |

3. Software Lending Library children's ages for parent members:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 - 2 | 5 | 2% |
| 3 - 5 | 35 | 17% |
| 6 - 8 | 46 | 23% |
| 9 - 11 | 45 | 22% |
| 12 - 14 | 38 | 19% |
| 15 - 17 | 21 | 10% |
| 18 - older | 15 | 7% |
| Total | 205 | 100% |

4. Software Lending Library Children's disabilities:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Autism | 38 | 17% |
| Cerebral Palsy | 40 | 18% |
| Learning disability | 17 | 8% |
| ADD/ADHD | 20 | 9% |
| Mental retardation | 17 | 8% |
| Speech/language deficit | 11 | 5% |
| Physical disability | 6 | 3% |
| EBD | 2 | 1% |
| Multiple disabilities | 8 | 4% |
| Blind/vision impairment | 2 | 1% |
| Deaf/hearing impaired | 1 | <1% |
| Other health impairments | 39 | 18% |
| Unknown | 17 | 8% |
| Total | 218 | 100% |

**Software Lending Library Evaluation Results**

To evaluate the services provided through the Software Lending Library, all current members were sent self -addressed, stamped anonymous evaluation surveys. Of the 240 surveys sent, 62 (26%) were returned. The following is a compilation of survey results, but not all questions were answered:

1. Please tell us who you are: (check all that apply)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parent or family member of a child or young adult with a disability | 44 | 71% |
| Professional who works with children with disabilities | 16 | 26% |
| Consumer with a disability | 1 | 1.5% |
| Other | 1 | 1.5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

2. Where do you live?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Metropolitan Twin Cities area | 34 | 55% |
| Greater Minnesota | 28 | 45% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

3. The SLL hours are sufficient

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 53 | 85% |
| No | 9 | 15% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

4. When I needed help, the Software Lending Library staff was

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Very helpful to me | 52 | 84% |
| Somewhat helpful to me | 7 | 11% |
| Not helpful to me | 3 | 5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

5. Library items I requested by phone or mail were sent to me in a timely fashion

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I strongly agree | 45 | 73% |
| I somewhat agree | 13 | 21% |
| I somewhat disagree | 4 | 6% |
| I strongly disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

6. The quality and selection of programs and devices available from the Software Lending Library is

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 40 | 65% |
| Very good | 20 | 32% |
| Good | 2 | 3% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

7. Have you made more informed purchases of computer software and assistive devices because of your membership in the Software Lending Library?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 51 | 82% |
| No | 11 | 8% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

8. Do you intend to renew your membership in the Software Lending Library when your current membership expires?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 57 | 92% |
| No | 5 | 8% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

9. In general, I would rate the Software Lending Library

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 40 | 65% |
| Very good | 20 | 32% |
| Good | 2 | 3% |
| Fair | 0 | 0% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

10. Would you like to see the services of the Software Lending Library continue?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 60 | 97% |
| No | 2 | 3% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

11. Comments about the Library service:

- "My son is better prepared for first-grade curriculum in his special ed program at school."
- "With the *Driver's Ed* CD, my son was able to understand the Driver's Permit book on CD enough to pass in a few months. His self-esteem hit the roof!"
- "Knowledge about how augmentative communication devices work – the ability to have my child try them before we purchase."
- "The opportunity for my son to start to read that the schools didn't provide. The talking stories are great!"
- "Access to a variety of programs – hard to know what is good and will work."

## Consultations

Consultations are free, private assistive technology assessments for children and adults with disabilities at the Computer Resource Center. During the consultation, a staff person works individually with each individual with a disability, offering observations and helping them find the best assistive technology solutions for their needs. A variety of adaptive computer equipment and educational software is tried during the consultation. The Computer Resource Center believes in a team approach and encourages teachers, therapists and other professionals, to participate in these sessions. The Computer Resource Center provided 120 consultations this year with 314 people attending.

People Attending Consultations:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parents | 110 | 35% |
| Professionals | 70 | 22% |
| Consumers | 120* | 38% |
| Other | 14 | 5% |
| Total | 314 | 100% |

* There is one consumer at each consultation.

## Consultation Evaluation Results

To evaluate the services provided through the consultations, each parent and/or professional attending the consultation were mailed an evaluation survey. Of the 120 people who received a consultation, 61 (51%) returned completed evaluation forms.

1. I felt the CRC staff listened to my concerns and tried to address them:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agree | 52 | 85% |
| Somewhat agree | 4 | 6% |
| Neutral | 3 | 5% |
| Somewhat disagree | 1 | 2% |
| Disagree | 1 | 2% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

2. I received useful information I could apply in selecting assistive technology:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agree | 46 | 76% |
| Somewhat agree | 10 | 16% |
| Neutral | 2 | 3% |
| Somewhat disagree | 1 | 2% |
| Disagree | 2 | 3% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

3. Appropriate equipment and software were discussed and/or demonstrated:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agree | 47 | 77% |
| Somewhat agree | 10 | 16% |
| Neutral | 2 | 3% |
| Somewhat disagree | 1 | 2% |
| Disagree | 1 | 2% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

4. My child/student was made to feel comfortable and at ease in the CRC:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agree | 56 | 92% |
| Somewhat agree | 1 | 2% |
| Neutral | 2 | 3% |
| Somewhat disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Disagree | 2 | 3% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

5. I appreciate that the evaluations are free:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agree | 56 | 92% |
| Somewhat agree | 1 | 2% |
| Neutral | 2 | 3% |
| Somewhat disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Disagree | 2 | 3% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

6. I think that the consultation will help me influence some aspect of services for my child:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agree | 43 | 70% |
| Somewhat agree | 10 | 17% |
| Neutral | 5 | 8% |
| Somewhat disagree | 1 | 2% |
| Disagree | 2 | 3% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

7. The information presented in the follow-up letter was useful:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agree | 34 | 56% |
| Somewhat agree | 11 | 18% |
| Neutral | 14 | 23% |
| Somewhat disagree | 2 | 3% |
| Disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 61 | 100% |

11. What parents and professionals said they liked about the consultation.

- "Staff really knew the products and has the patience to demonstrate the software and work with the physical, mental disabilities. We have already purchased the right kind of mouse three days after our session."
- "I really appreciated all the info that was provided. We are at the beginning of the AT process and the consultant did a nice job of not overwhelming us with too much info. However, we got some good help in getting us pointed in the right direction."
- "Did a great job – covered everything and then some – stayed extra to help with everything and showed us a lot of neat stuff."
- "I appreciated the thorough exploration of software for my client and the kind and thoughtful manner of the staff person. She made the individual and I very glad we came to PACER."
- "Staff was very knowledgeable and well-trained, took a genuine interest in the patient, and did not rush, helpful with information sheets. I was impressed with the operation."

**Information and Referral**

The CRC provides information and referral to parents of children and young adults with disabilities, individuals with disabilities and professionals. Information is disseminated by telephone, e-mail or personal visits. From June 1, 2000 to May 31, 2001, 1,508 people contacted the CRC requesting information about computers, assistive technology, educational software, Internet resources and other technology-related issues.

**Contacts:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Parents | 661 | 44% |
| Professionals | 557 | 37% |
| Consumers | 201 | 13% |
| Other | 89 | 6% |
| Total | 1508 | 100% |

**Publications**

The Computer Resource Center publishes a 16-page newsletter, *The Computer Monitor*, which is distributed to almost 8,000 families and professionals in Minnesota and the United States. Two issues were published in the Fall 2000 and Winter 2001. *The Computer Monitor* contains feature articles, as well as software reviews, information about the Software Lending Library, upcoming workshops and other events. Many *Computer Monitor* articles were reprinted in national disability and technology publications.

**The Cummins Engine Foundation Grant**

During the past year, the PACER Computer Resource Center worked closely with volunteers from the Cummins Power Generation/Onan Corporation in Fridley, Minnesota to help disadvantaged families of children with disabilities receive computer equipment and training. The volunteers helped set up systems and provided training and technical assistance to the families. Funds from the Cummins project also provided 200 member

scholarships to families for the CRC's Software Lending Library.

## Conclusion

The need for accessible computer technology and information continues to grow exponentially as success in society often requires computer ability. PACER's Computer Resource Center believes that offering educational software, assistive devices and easy access to these tools can greatly enhance the lives of children and young adults with disabilities in numerous ways. Technology can provide solutions and opportunities for communication, education, recreation and employment. Since 1987, the Center has been a mainstay in providing these important services for parents, professionals and consumers, and will continue to provide these crucial life skills.

# Project KITE:
# Kids Included through Technology are Enriched

Project KITE (Kids Included through Technology are Enriched) is a project of PACER Center, designed to foster inclusion of children with disabilities in home and classroom settings in culturally sensitive ways through the use of assistive technology. It was first funded in 1994, replicated in 1997, and funded for Outreach in 1999. Project KITE is a model demonstration project in its second year of Outreach. The project focuses on children ages 3-8, from low-income backgrounds and from a variety of cultures.

The KITE Project model is being introduced in four rural areas of Minnesota through the KITE Outreach project. KITE has four components: teaming, training, technical assistance and technology access.

Through the KITE Outreach project, teams of teachers and parents participated in KITE training to learn about their children with special needs, to learn about various technologies that might support inclusion of the children in school and family activities, and to integrate those technologies in natural environments. During the training sessions, KITE staff provided technical assistance related to computer hardware, software, and other technologies, as well as educational assistance for integrating the technology, through site visits to home and school. KITE staff provided access to technology, and thereby supported inclusion, for focus children of the project by loaning computers, software, and other devices to their homes and classrooms. Many children of various cultures and from low-income backgrounds who were classmates of the focus children benefited as well.

Project KITE Outreach to date has impacted 9 focus children and 116 classmates. The service providers trained during this project served 183 children with disabilities. There have been nine teams of parents and professionals from preschools in rural Minnesota (Duluth, Pipestone, and the White Earth Indian Reservation) trained in the KITE Model to date. During Year 2, the White Earth Indian Reservation has been the focus of concentration. The project served 3 focus children, and their 26 classmates. The children and families trained on the reservation were all Native Americans except for one child who had been adopted by a Native American family and was part African American. In April 2001, training began at the fourth and final site, Princeton, Minnesota.

**Goals of the KITE Outreach Project**

The Project's goal is to train teams of teachers and parents to use technology to support the inclusion of children with a disability, ages 3-8, in low economic and under-served populations in rural Minnesota. The specific goals of the KITE Outreach Project are:

1. To prepare early childhood team members, including family members, through teaming, training, and technical assistance to include young children with disabilities with their typical peers, and to increase technical access of children of diverse cultures appropriate technology and culturally appropriate services.
2. To increase the knowledge, skills, and confidence of parents and professionals to use technology with young children with disabilities by providing 15 hours of training, technical assistance through site visits, by producing effective resources and by disseminating pertinent information.
3. To train teams of trainers from among KITE graduates and collaborating agencies to implement and evaluate the KITE model in new locations, to include young children with disabilities with their peers and to increase access of children of diverse cultures, to appropriate technology and culturally appropriate software.

**Participants and Teaming**

The concept of teaming in this project was a focal point. The criteria for selection of the Outreach sites was:

- The program would serve children aged 3-8 with disabilities.
- Parents and students would represent a variety of cultures and income levels.
- Professionals would be trained in developmentally appropriate practice and working in stable setting.
- Professionals and parents had little or no experience with technology in their homes and classrooms and showed enthusiasm for learning.
- Classroom teachers, service-providers and parents would benefit from teaming.
- Teams had a desire to use assistive technology to enhance the functional skills of the focus child.
- Teams would cooperate through an on-going evaluation.

The three teams from the White Earth Indian Reservation, for a total of 9 participants, consisted of a teacher, a service provider (therapist, paraprofessional or Head Start coordinator), and the parent(s) or caregiver of a child with a disability, were trained this year. Parents in this area of rural Minnesota had very little exposure to assistive technology for their children with special needs prior to the training. Parents needed more information on tools that their child could use to enhance their functional skills. Teachers and therapists felt they needed information about integrating technology into the classroom curriculum and using technology to include children with disabilities with typical peers. The KITE model included instruction and practice in these areas. They felt the computer as a tool could also enhance their efforts to educate the children of the tribe on their Ojibwe language.

Teaming took place in a number of ways. Videotaped demonstration activities were developed by the team to fit into existing curriculum and designed to meet individual objectives for the focus children. The teams were given several opportunities throughout the training to meet to discuss ideas of integration of technology tools to achieve inclusion within the classroom. The teachers and parents exchanged PACER's loaned devices and software between home and school. Parents and teachers noted the impact this program had on their child through the progress on computer skills, and basic functional communication skills, at both home and school.

**Training**

The following is an outline of the topics for each of the training sessions held on the White Earth Reservation and Princeton. The Princeton training will be concluded August 2001, but is not included in this data.

**Session 1:**
**White Earth: 09/21/00 & Princeton: 4/06/01**
Introductions
Preliminary self- assessment
Setting up the environment
Putting a computer together
Individualizing your computer
Housekeeping items
Appendix review
Closure activity

**Session 2**
**White Earth: 10/12/00 & Princeton: 5/03/01**
*"Take home a computer"* survey
Benefits of assistive technology in early childhood
Featuring assistive technology equipment-switches, aug.com devices, etc.
Discussion of previous experience with technology
Learning about software
PACER Center Software Lending Library
Housekeeping & Closure activity

**Session 4:**
**White Earth: 12/07/00 & Princeton: 06/13/01**
Hand in photo permission slips. *Teaming perspective survey*
Considering assistive technology in the IFSP/IEP
SETT framework presentation
Customizing ideas with Kid Pix Studio Deluxe
Exploring creative software
Planning the demonstration activity
Housekeeping
Closure Activity

**Session 5:**
**White Earth: 12/19/00 & Princeton: 6/26/01**
On-site activity
Site visit observation
Video taping

**Session 3**
**White Earth: 11/09/00 & Princeton: 05/31/01**
Addressing cultural diversity in early childhood
Cultural resources; *Tell Me A Story*
Customizing for the individual child - Intellitools
Infusing technology into the curriculum
Learning more about the software
Introduction to the KITE Team Activity
Housekeeping
Closure activity

**Session 6:**
**White Earth: 1/11/01 & Princeton: 8/16/01**
Individualizing software
Digital picture projects
Choosing hardware for home or classroom
Funding
Celebrate completion of On-site activities/KITE training
Post self-assessment form
KITE training evaluation
Training of Trainers explanation; Certificate of Completion

**Technical Assistance and Access:**

In the second year of the KITE Outreach Project, staff loaned a Macintosh computer to each of the 3 focus children's classroom settings, and to each of the participating families. KITE provided a means of access most appropriate for the focus child either a switch with switch interface or a trackball or touch windows or regular mouse. PACER provided augmentative communication devices, and specialized keyboards as needed by the focus children. The equipment remained with teams for the duration of the KITE training. KITE also provided a free one-year membership to the Computer Resource Center's Software Lending Library, where 1,600 pieces of equipment and software are available for loan. During each training session there was a period of time set aside for hands-on trial of different software and assistive technology equipment. At the conclusion of the training session six, participants were provided funding information, including public or government grant opportunities, private programs, insurance information, community-based or private sector funding and low-interest loan as a means of advocating for personal assistive technology.

During each training session there was a period of time set aside for hands-on trial of different software and assistive technology equipment. Participants expressed their views that the access, hands on training and technical assistance provided the key to successful training. Two months after the completion of the KITE training, one kindergarten teacher expressed her view regarding the success of the training by inclusion in her classroom in this way:

*"Things are progressing beyond my wildest dreams with the technology. I have taught trouble shooting right along as a technology skill. The students can fix so many little glitches that naturally occur with computer use. It truly is amazing to see. Even the other primary teachers will check with one of the students if we are not available to help with their minor problems. Each student has completed and is using their own web page. We are in the process of purchasing quite a bit of adaptive technology equipment for our J.F. This class is such a unique one with the two full time special education students (MMM) and the two full time E.B.D. students (behavior disordered). The technology is a great asset to keep their learning always going forward. The student's behavior sometimes is such that adult or peer interaction just isn't positive, but the interaction with a "machine" doesn't cause problems. I am so proud of the progress the students have made this year and it truly amazes me to see all the learning that has taken place."*

A key component of the KITE model is providing technical assistance to KITE participants. In this second year of the KITE Outreach Project, staff received 91 requests (either by phone or e-mail) for technical assistance between June 1,2000 and June 1 2001. There were 4,670 visits to KITE's Web site. Staff provided site visits to both school locations and homes of the focus children 4 times during the training period to provide technical assistance due to equipment failure, troubleshooting technical problems, setting-up of equipment, or to assist with installing programs. Other types of technical assistance included requests for information about appropriate technology for specific children, information about the latest technology, funding, requests for equipment or software, or information about articles supporting the use of assistive technology with young children.

**Educational Materials**

Each of the participating schools receives a KITE guidebook, a KITE video, and a KITE resource binder with packets of information given at each training session.

The KITE book, *Kids Included through Technology are Enriched: A guidebook for teachers of young children,* continues to be helpful to teachers. In addition to the almost 675 copies previously distributed, 18 copies of the 128-page illustrated handbook have been purchased during this past year. The book provides the rationale for using assistive technology to include young children with special needs in the classroom and guides parents and professionals toward practical strategies for integrating computers, communication aids, and other devices to help children with disabilities at school and at home.

*Young Children and Technology*, the 14-minute closed-captioned video, created by the KITE project, continues to be well received. This video introduces parents and teachers to the potential of technology for youngsters. It shows how assistive technology can benefit young children with disabilities, how to select technology for special needs and how to include assistive technology in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). In addition to the 29 videos previously purchased, and 7 requests for the video rental last year, 16 videos were given to Year 2 participants, 15 videos were purchased, and 1 video rented in the past year. Several universities have requested the videotape to use in their teacher training programs. Feedback indicates that the videotape is helpful to parents and professionals who need introductory level information.

**Evaluation:**

To assess effectiveness of the training, KITE staff gathers response information from pre and post-tests, surveys, written and verbal feedback from participants, and personal observations. The pre-tests and post-tests for both parents and professionals most dramatically demonstrated the effectiveness of the training and technical assistance to the trainees and for the children who were involved. All the information indicates that KITE made a definite positive impact for teachers and parents of diverse preschool students with special needs in the areas of knowledge, skills, and practice.

Self-rating by both parents and professionals indicated that a significant level of knowledge was acquired from the training. To augment this information and to measure a corresponding increase in skills, videotapes were made during the Team Demonstration activities. These videotapes demonstrated the many varied and creative ways the assistive technology and computers were being integrated into the curriculum.

At the first session, participants were asked to complete a pre-test, a self-assessment of skills, which was based on the objectives for the course. The questions of the pre-test had a scale of 1-4, with 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree and 4=strongly agree. At the final session participants were asked to respond to the same self-assessment instrument they had completed at the beginning of the course. Included along with the total percentage increased number is the scaled percentage increased number based upon the scale of 1 to 4 that was used in the survey to more accurately depict the progress made by the KITE participants.

The self-assessment questions on the 9 parent and professional surveys from White Earth were as follows:

1. I know about the benefits and types of computer and assistive technology available for young children.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 2.0 | Post-test: 3.6 | Percentage increase: 80% | Scaled increase: 40% |
| Professionals | Pre-test: 2.0 | Post-test: 4.0 | Percentage increase: 100% | Scaled increase: 50% |

2. I use computer and assistive technology with young children.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 1.7 | Post-test: 3.7 | Percentage increase: 118% | Scaled increase: 50% |
| Professionals | Pre-test: 2.3 | Post-test: 3.0 | Percentage increase: 30% | Scaled increase: 17% |

3. I know about assistive and computer technology resources.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 2.3 | Post-test: 3.0 | Percentage increase: 30% | Scaled increase: 17% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 2.7 | Post-test: 4.0 | Percentage increase: 48% | Scaled increase: 32% |

4. I can identify (evaluate) my child's (children's) strengths and needs related to computer and assistive technology.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 1.7 | Post-test: 3.3 | Percentage increase: 94% | Scaled increase: 40% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 2.5 | Post-test: 3.2 | Percentage increase: 28% | Scaled increase: 17% |

5. I know about specific ways computer and assistive technology can enhance learning and social development for my child.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 1.7 | Post-test: 3.0 | Percentage increase: 76% | Scaled increase: 32% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 2.3 | Post-test: 3.8 | Percentage increase: 65% | Scaled increase: 37% |

6. I know how to make adaptations to assistive technology and software so that it more closely matches my family's cultural background.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 1.3 | Post-test: 2.7 | Percentage increase: 107% | Scaled increase: 35% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 2.0 | Post-test: 3.3 | Percentage increase: 65% | Scaled increase: 32% |

7. I know how my child can use computer and assistive technology for more effective inclusion with his/her peers.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 1.7 | Post-test: 3.0 | Percentage increase: 76% | Scaled increase: 33% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 2.3 | Post-test: 3.7 | Percentage increase: 61% | Scaled increase: 35% |

8. I have the skills to give information about computers and assistive technology and software to my child's teacher.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 1.7 | Post-test: 2.7 | Percentage increase: 59% | Scaled increase: 25% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 1.8 | Post-test: 3.3 | Percentage increase: 83% | Scaled increase: 37% |

9. I can confidently advocate for incorporating computer and assistive technology in my child's IFSP or IEP.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 2.0 | Post-test: 3.0 | Percentage increase: 50% | Scaled increase: 25% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 2.0 | Post-test: 3.2 | Percentage increase: 60% | Scaled increase: 30% |

10. I have opportunities to borrow and/or use computer equipment and software.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 1.7 | Post-test: 2.7 | Percentage increase: 59% | Scaled increase: 25% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 2.5 | Post-test: 3.5 | Percentage increase: 40% | Scaled increase: 25% |

11. I have information about funding for simple and complex assistive technology tools for my child.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 1.0 | Post-test: 2.7 | Percentage increase: 170% | Scaled increase: 42% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 2.0 | Post-test: 2.8 | Percentage increase: 40% | Scaled increase: 20% |

12. I know about electronic Internet resources for families of children with special needs.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Pre-test: 1.7 | Post-test: 2.7 | Percentage increase: 59% | Scaled increase: 25% |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 2.3 | Post-test: 3.8 | Percentage increase: 65% | Scaled increase: 37% |

13. (I am aware of how my cultural beliefs and values affect my attitudes, communication, and behaviors in how I provide services.)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: | Not applicable | | | |
| Professionals: | Pre-test: 3.5 | Post-test: 3.7 | Percentage increase: 6% | Scaled increase: 5% |

For the parents, the average pre-test rating indicated that these parents felt uncertain about their skills related to using technology and assistive devices with their young child with special needs. The comparison

between pre and post-test scores reflect a substantial increase in their understanding of how computers could benefit their child.

Parent and professional participants in the KITE Outreach Project offered comments related to their experiences with the project. Their observations recorded on post-tests and follow-up surveys, reflect satisfaction and positive feedback for the efforts expended on their behalf. The following are some of the comments from the KITE Outreach participants in Year 2 following the training period:

- "Staff is very professional and helpful."
- "They encouraged us at each step and were extremely enthusiastic."
- "The team was always willing to provide any service to our families to make them comfortable in using the computer."
- "Thanks for the opportunities you provided to our children and families. Me-gwitch!"
- "Thank you for the great information. Good job."
- "I enjoyed the workshops, I learned a lot!"
- "I enjoyed the sessions and the site visits equally well. The staff was pleasant, entertaining and informative."

All three teams were given the opportunity to take the information they had learned from the training sessions and incorporate it into an activity that would benefit their focus child, and would demonstrate integration of assistive technology into a classroom activity. All demonstration activities were videotaped during the 5th session. The three participating teams all showed creativity and appropriateness in their selection and presentation of their chosen activities.

**Dissemination of Information:**

Three articles were written and published by KITE staff in PACER Center's *Computer Monitor*. In addition, KITE staff made 7 presentations during 2000-2001 reaching 196 people. In addition, approximately 200 people were reached at informational booths.

| Date | Location | Group | Participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 08/30/00 | Minneapolis, MN | YMCA Staff In-service | 12 |
| 01/12/01 | Albuquerque, NM | TAM Conference | 10 |
| 02/06/01 | Minneapolis, MN | Early Childhood Workshop | 30 |
| 03/07/01 | Minneapolis, MN | Play & Learn Workshop | 75 |
| 03/12/01 | Marshall, MN | Day of Excellence | 4 |
| 03/15/01 | Bemidji, MN | MEGA Conference | 53 |
| 03/24/01 | St. Cloud, MN | Early Childhood class | 12 |
| Total | | | 196 |

## Conclusion

To date, Outreach KITE Project has worked with a total of 41 people, 22 professionals (12 teachers, 7 therapists, 1 Service Cooperative Coordinator, 1 Disabilities Coordinator and a student intern), 10 parents and 9 focus children. The project produced a ripple effect in the professionals' classroom of helping children with and without disabilities. During the year, staff has received 91 calls and/or e-mails requesting information and assistance, and 4,670 visits on the KITE Web site. In addition, parents and professionals participating in the second year of KITE Outreach have requested resource information for dissemination to parents within their communities and other areas of Minnesota.

The pre-tests and post-tests for both parents and professionals demonstrate the effectiveness of the training and technical assistance to the trainees, and for the children who were involved. In addition, this project's

videotape and a guidebook for teachers and parents of children with disabilities continues to aid teachers and parents in using technology with young children who have disabilities. These products, along with the curriculum package and training, will ensure that the KITE Outreach project will continue to impact young children with disabilities and without disabilities, their parents and professionals who work with them.

During this year, the 2nd of the Outreach project, the 3 teams from the White Earth Indian Reservation were given the opportunity to take the information they had learned from the training sessions and incorporate it into an activity that would benefit their focus child, and would demonstrate integration of assistive technology into a classroom activity. All demonstration activities were videotaped during the 5th session. The 3 participating teams all showed creativity and appropriateness in their selection and presentation of their chosen activities. Participants were rated by KITE staff on the degree of understanding demonstrated in the areas of teaming, training, technical access, and technical assistance during their on-site activity.

In the original Outreach model, Willmar, Minnesota was schedule for the project, but due to scheduling difficulties, Princeton, Minnesota replaced Willmar as part of the project. Training began in Princeton in April 2001. Completion of this fourth training site will be completed in August 2001. The results of the training will be included in the 2001-2002 report. Another change made during Year 2, was that of scheduling site visits separate from the training. Project staff visit the homes and the schools one week following the training to allow the information to be integrated, and the participants time to formulate any questions they may have on the material presented. During the first year, this happened during the first month after the training.

The KITE model continues to be a strong model for training parents, grandparents, teachers, and professionals to use technology as a tool to support inclusion of children with special needs from diverse backgrounds, in home and classroom environments.

# Coalition

Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Minnesota, Inc.

Arc

Minnesota Brain Injury Association of Minnesota

Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota

Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

Family Service, Inc.

MAHI (formerly Metropolitan Association for Hearing Impaired)

Mental Health Association of Minnesota

MINCEP Epilepsy Care P.A.

Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health

Minnesota Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Minnesota State Council on Disability

Muscular Dystrophy Association

National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota, Inc.

Spina Bifida Association

Tourette Syndrome Association, Minnesota Chapter

Twin Cities Autism Society

United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota, Inc.

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